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The Continuity of Medieval and Canonical Literature

BY NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

WHEN I was planning this paper I had just finished reading the autobiography of the Jesuit recusant, William Weston. Two years ago I had read the John Gerard autobiography of roughly the same dates. Suddenly there came to me the idea that by making an incision in the 1590's I had not only a division between what is commonly called medieval and Catholic literature, but I had authors who, representing the width and catholicity of Catholicism, provided also an admirable point from which both to look forward and back. And, like all authors of staying power, these two writers remain extraordinarily contemporary. As an example of what I mean by the width and catholicity of Catholicism, consider the development of drama. When the curtain rises on a modern stage drawing-room and a maid walks down center to answer a telephone on the left, we have possibly an unconscious repetition of the server at Mass when he crosses the altar preparatory to ringing the bell at the Consecration. After all the drama did stem out of the medieval Catholic Church. For instance, consider the Passion of Christ which is read on Good Friday; three pitches of voice are used by the three cantors: a high pitch for Pilate, the rabbis and the crowd; a middle pitch for the narrative; a deep pitch for the words of Christ, or the stress and anti-stress in the general speech of the Mass [*Dominus Vobiscum . . . Et Cum Spiritu Tuo*]. As in any good dramatic dialogue, you can catch the rhythm of statement and response. Now think how easily Christmas, Good Friday and Easter led from a vocal enactment of their Gospels in the sanctuary to their pictorial realization on the steps of the church. You have your first Mystery Plays. Then again as the range widens and the platform leaves the portals of the church for the market-square, you have a blending of religious and secular drama — the Miracle Plays and famous Moralities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By the time of Weston and Gerard of course, you have the Elizabethan theater, the forerunner of the eighteenth century playhouse with its picture-frame stage as we know it.

I could, I suppose, string a catalogue of names together alphabetically, or, alternatively, I could list writers who happened to be Catholics, century by century. I want instead to try to relate the present to the past, to leave the encyclopedias upon their shelves and show, halfway through the twentieth century, what contribution Catholicism has made to English literature. To use a well-worn critical cliché, what has been the "continuity of spirit" these last

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thousand years? For, remember, although Dryden may not have intended writing satire like that of Alfred Douglas or Roy Campbell, neither Douglas nor Campbell could have written as they have, had it not been for Dryden; every writer of staying power inevitably borrows from the past as well as prepares the way for the future. Let us begin with William Weston. Here is a saintly man, practicing his Catholic religion against great odds, yet always giving everybody the benefit of the doubt — even the informer. For perhaps one day the informer, too, will discover that he has a soul to save and so turn to repentance. The Nazi, Fascist, *agent-provocateur* are not new types. One reads about them in the Bible, and Christ never feared to speak either *to* or *about* them. Weston as a disciple knew and loved his Master well. Not caring a jot for personal safety, he served those houses of Elizabethan England where the old religion lingered, and Mass and the sacraments were still sought.

What seems a quiet, but not uneventful, autobiography (the American publishers call the book, *An Autobiography from the Jesuit Underground*), shows in Weston a type of Catholicism. In a sense, you meet it again in some of Graham Greene's characters — this persistence, almost obsession, with the problem of loyalties. If I bring you the sacraments in your house, "the pearls of great price," may I not bring disfavor upon your wife, children, whole family and fortune? If I make converts, may I not really be their executioner — the cause of their later hanging from the Tyburn Tree? There is a sort of see-saw movement about the life of this saintly, liberal-minded Jesuit.

IN contrast, with John Gerard you have more of the schoolboy commando type — a type not far removed from some of Evelyn Waugh's heroes. There is a favoritism in the Gerard apostolate towards the aristocracy, the great estates and the large houses — though, to be scrupulously fair this was simply because it was easier to operate successfully through such homes. The autobiography is not nearly so introspective as Weston's, but it is tremendously exciting — like E. F. Benson or John Buchan. It is straightforward story-telling — an exact recalling and recounting of what occurred. It is narrative in the direct descent of the mediæval oral tradition — the tradition kept to in William Langland or such religious treatises as, say, *The Rule of Anchoreesses*. In this manual for anchoresses, everything is eminently practical. A nun keeps a cow, and the cow strays; the nun pursues the cow, the cow trespasses and so the nun is threatened with a fine; she loses her temper, swears and then has to beseech and implore the hayward beadle of her parish to forgive her. So in the end she has to pay the original fine — the moral of which is that a nun should keep a cat. Indeed much of this little book is filled with the rules of conventional morality mixed with a certain amount of religious instruction — like the Miracle Plays and Moralities. Sophistication is limited to alliteration or a play on words. Gerard

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is obviously in this tradition when he puns: "[This informer] was faithful but only to men who did not know the word faith." Yet this was only one tradition. For, by Elizabethan times, it was quite apparent that another more reflective and subtle tradition had developed — the legacy of spiritual writers such as the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and, say, Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*. Here is an anonymous thirteenth or fourteenth century author describing the breakdown — literally the breaking down — of the soul before it can reach through the cloud of unknowing to true union with God:

And therefore break down all knowing and feeling of manner of creatures; but most busily of thyself. For on the knowing and the feeling of thyself hangeth the knowing and feeling of all other creatures; for in regard of it, all other creatures be lightly forgotten. For, if thou wilt busily set thee to the proof, thou shalt find, when thou has forgotten all other creatures and all their works — yea! and also thine own works — that there shall remain after, betwixt thee and thy God, a naked knowing and a feeling of thine own being: the which being and feeling must always be destroyed, ere the time be that thou mayest feel verily the perfection of this work.

Roughly a century later, you can see in what tradition William Weston is writing, when he notes: "Prisons are full of priests, but God's word is not in chains. In the midst of tribulation, sorrow and weariness our mother Jerusalem is not sterile, and ceases not to bear her children." The language has more edge, imagery is beginning to take the place of allegory — as indeed it was in poetry.

Whereas Langland in *Piers Plowman* could paraphrase the Active Life in the character of Do-Well (Keep the Commandments), the Contemplative Life in Do-Better (Sell all you have and give to the poor), and the Mystical Life in Do-Best (Come, follow Me), Chaucer lived in the spring of a Renaissance Europe; unlike Langland, he had never known the simplicities of medieval life before the Black Plague and again, in contrast with Langland, he was by birth well-to-do and by nature slightly inclined towards a natural scepticism. He knew, because he saw, the abuses to which religion could be put—the pardons, the indulgences and fake relics that could be sold to the simple or unsuspecting. I have often wondered if he had not *The Rule of Anchoresses* in mind and the memory of the incident of the nun, cow and the cat when he wrote of his own Prioress, in the Prologue to his *Canterbury Tales*:

She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous
Kaight in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.

There is a sort of gentle irony here. The Religious Orders had grown too rich. Respectability had crept in. It was poets like Chaucer who came to remind men that Christ was crucified not to guarantee the standards of respectability, but to save them from their sins. Chaucer saw the corruption, the worm in the bud

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and could only send the mockingbird of his satire to peck at it. Those who followed Chaucer, such as Weston or Gerard, came when the decay had already set in, when all that they could hope for was that by patient waiting, if nothing rash or wild was attempted, Catholicism might survive its present trials and blossom again. Perhaps even persecution might act as a kind of purgatorial refining fire. And somewhere between these two ideas — a second spring, or blossoming, and a purgatorial fire — there was to fuse some four hundred years later the concept of "the fire and the rose being one."

Nowadays the image of tongues of flame enfolded to make a knot of fire so that "the fire and the rose shall be one" is well known; in particular, as it were, after four hundred years it has been repeatedly used in the poetry of Edith Sitwell and others. The reason for this gap of four hundred years is that whereas Gerard and Weston thought their religion might be suppressed for a spell of maybe forty to fifty years, it was only the fanaticism of a few Catholics that dashed their hopes finally when a group of hotheads decided to resort to violence, attempting to blow up the Houses of Parliament one November the fifth (1605). From then on, the fate of the monasteries, the plundering and falling into ruin of the abbeys, followed naturally. As you look back to the reign of Elizabeth, perhaps it would be apt to say that these abbeys and monasteries underwent a necessary spiritual bombing. Certainly their similarity to the modern bomb-site suggests this image. I suspect that it was with something like this in mind that a century ago Newman exclaimed as he surveyed the immensity of English literature, "We cannot undo the past, English literature will ever *have been* Protestant." Now however, in the light of the English Catholic Renaissance, I can safely affirm that the medieval Catholic tradition was somehow maintained.

ALL during Penal Times, right through the eighteenth century, Lancashire, at least, remained a loyal Catholic stronghold. Yet, if you look up the records, you will find that Lancashire children were not encouraged to go to communion before they were twelve, nor were their parents encouraged to make it a daily practice. Why? I think the answer largely resides in the fact that there was very little native spiritual reading to fall back upon and that what spiritual treatises there were tended to be translated pamphlets smuggled from abroad; and on the Continent such writing was more often than not tainted by Jansenism. Naturally this is a generalization and I offer it only because I am going to follow it up with some of the more notable exceptions at home. Apart from recusant poets such as Thomas Campion and Robert Southwell, I would refer you to some of the Catholic Emblem Books of the seventeenth century — more especially *Partheneia Sacra* by the Jesuit, Henry Hawkins.

Hawkins was the son of a cavalier, becoming the lord of a castle in his own right on his father's death. He was ordained in Belgium and knew both im-

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prisonment in the Tower and exile. But he remained dauntless. The marriage of Charles I with Henrietta Maria had eased the position of Catholics, and having his books printed abroad, he returned to distribute them. *Partheneia Sacra* appeared in 1633; its aim was to further devotion to Our Lady.

Yet even *Partheneia Sacra*, though an original work of considerable beauty, owed much to Luzvic's *Le Coeur Devot*, which Hawkins had translated some time before. In fact, Dryden apart and his long poem *The Hind and the Panther*, the main references to Catholicism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are to be found in authors of other denominations—Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson* or *Robinson Crusoe*, for instance. As a sign of a trickle of tolerance, observe Defoe's charming and fair portrait of a French Benedictine; in spite of continued religious bitteresses by Sterne or Smollet, it shows which way the wind was blowing at the beginning of the Age of Reason:

And now I speak of marrying it brings me naturally to say something of the French ecclesiastic that I had brought with me out of the ship's crew, whom I took up at sea. It is true this man was a Roman, and perhaps it may give offence to some hereafter, if I leave anything extraordinary upon record of a man whom, before I begin, I must (to set him out in just colours) represent in terms very much to his disadvantage, in the account of Protestants; as, first, that he was a Papist; secondly a Popish priest; and, thirdly, a French Popish priest. But justice demands of me to give him a due character; and I must say he was a grave, sober, pious and most religious person: exact in his life, extensive in his charity, and exemplary in almost everything he did. What, then, can anyone say against his profession? though it may be my opinion, perhaps as well as the opinion of others who shall read this, that he was mistaken [in his beliefs].

Would you ever think of describing *Robinson Crusoe* as a "Nonconformist novel"? Already I hear you murmur that the idea sounds as preposterous as it is ludicrous. Yet this is more or less what people do when they chatter to each other, "Oh! *Brideshead Revisited!* Now that's my idea of a Catholic novel," or, questioningly, "I suppose you really ought to say that *The End of the Affair* is a Catholic novel?" Librarians, doubtless, become accustomed to hearing such things. You see, it is all part of the modern desire to label and number everything—education, age groups or insurance cards; and with this desire there has grown a similar critical desire to label fiction—the Amis-Wain school, an L. P. Hartley situation, a Walter de la Mare fantasy. One of the current tags is "Catholic novel"; but I imagine that in a decade it will be as dead as that old tag of the thirties—"social realist." I believe it is worth pointing out that whereas Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street*, when it was first published before the 1918 war, was not referred to as a "Catholic novel"—you remember Michael Fane, its hero, on the last page is just about to be received into the Church—when it was reprinted after the Second World War it was immediately

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dubbed as such. In the end perhaps it is simpler and wiser just to agree with Gertrude Stein that a novel is a novel is a novel . . .

OBVIOUSLY a man's faith, like a man's nationality, will distinguish his work. Disraeli's prose is both sibilant and oriental; Joyce's alive with the sound of the Liffey as she "ninny-goes, nanny-goes, nancing by"; or Hopkins' with the rhythm of Duns Scotus — he "who of all men most sways my spirits to peace." Now, there is something that perhaps distinguishes the novelist or poet who happens to be Catholic from his other contemporaries. Let me speak primarily of the novelist.

In Greene or Sean O'Faolain, in Waugh or Bruce Marshall, in Antonia White or David Mathew — or younger writers such as Aubrey Menen or Isobel English — in some form or other, you will find a predominant interest in sex; in some cases this is an obsession. This interest is sometimes put down to the Church's rigorous stand on matters such as divorce and contraception. Personally I suspect that this is merely half the answer. You see, when in the early part of the last century the Penal Laws were repealed, those Catholics that had still maintained their religion were living up till then in what might be called "a state of siege." My own grandfather told my mother shortly after I was born that if I became either a priest or an actor he would not leave me his gold watch. Both professions, he believed, were equally unrespectable. Well, the point I want to make is that in a siege, a city's walls must be manned — there must be a strict discipline and *esprit de corps*, with a result that the arts of peace such as poetry and philosophy and theology suffer an eclipse. That is precisely what had happened to English Catholics when they were granted emancipation in the 1830's; for centuries on the defensive, they had acquired "a siege mentality." Thus in 1849 in matters of theology and spiritual writings, as in architecture, there was much time to be made up. But the English poets and novelists saw into the future and within less than a century were stating in the terms of their art the problems with which theologians and philosophers would have to deal. In 1945, at a centenary celebration held to mark Newman's entry into the Church of Rome, I heard Monsignor Ronald Knox say that he believed there were three major objections to Catholicism on the part of the average Englishman; the fact that the Pope was a foreigner, the Church's teaching on contraception, and her attitude towards divorce. These, then, are naturally problems that are going to interest and affect a novelist who is a Catholic, just as fifty years ago different problems such as capitalism, distributism and the possibility of a Welfare State interested Chesterton and Belloc — and to a lesser extent that neglected, but superb stylist, Maurice Baring. And in looking back at the first half of the twentieth century there always ring those challenging words of Newman: "You cannot attempt a sinless literature of sinful man."

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As far as English Catholics are concerned, Newman is the greatest creative thinker of the last century. When he referred to England again becoming Mary's dowry as it had been in the Middle Ages, it was with no desire to undo the past, but rather to bridge it. He did not wish to liberalize Catholicism, but to catholicize liberalism; and if you listened charitably to another man's argument, he would stress, there were always points of contact to be found. Bigotry was offensive to truth, just as it was a disservice to truth to whitewash history — and never was any cardinal more conscious of the whitewashing that can be done by the over-earnest when he becomes a fanatic or propagandist. Perhaps the most violent and bestial of all wars had been those carried out in the name of religion. So when Newman looked for a second spring, it was a sort of gesture to the future, an anticipation in faith of what actually was to follow; and at the time when he was formulating these thoughts, a poet in rags under the arches of Charing Cross was setting down in his writing the poem which more than any other was going to show that, with a second spring, a Catholic literary revival had also begun. *The Hound of Heaven* and *The Hind and the Panther*: that is a comparison which alliteration has thrown like a spark off my pen—yet no sooner is it down than one remembers that if Dryden did not mean to write like Francis Thompson, at least Francis Thompson could not have written as he did had it not been for Dryden. There is a continuity of spirit there, a shackling of individual talent to the tradition.

IN the pages of *The Dublin Review*, the oldest Catholic periodical, you can trace, better than anywhere else, this literary revival. Take the attitude of William George Ward, a typical mid-nineteenth century Catholic, and that of his son, Wilfrid Ward. William believed in gathering his contributors together and persuading them in concert first to defend Papal Infallibility and secondly to attack Agnosticism. He would have liked, contemporaries said, "a Papal Bull every morning with his *Times* at breakfast." In contrast, his son opened the pages to Catholic and non-Catholic writers alike, believing in 1906 that the aim of such a review should be not to present one "school of thought, but to keep up a certain intellectual standard." You see, as Newman's first biographer, he was very conscious of those earlier words of Newman: "We are living on the intellect of a former age." For Wilfrid had tried his vocation and was later to recall that those seminarians who were most praised by their masters had been those who had learnt quickest by heart. Cardinal Manning was speaking very sensibly when he declared that seminarians ought to read Dickens as well as Aquinas. For, as theologians are beginning to realize in this century, sociology and theology and psychology do share a very real plane of inter-connection.

In sponsoring a Catholic revival in letters, Newman more than most writers realized the danger of hard and fast rules, just as he realized in the confessional

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the danger of hard and fast rules with regard to sin. "The Church is not a policeman, but a guardian," he had said, adding, "you cannot attempt a sinless literature of sinful man." Imagine the man of hard and fast rules visiting ancient Greece. He would note that such and such a city lay in a plain between two rocky barriers, meeting at an angle; he might note also that there was a good supply of water, olives in abundance, and the oil first-rate. Unlike Newman, not for a moment would he think of reporting that "the olive tree was so choice in nature and so noble in shape, that it excited a religious veneration." Nor for a moment would he think of speaking of the clear air which "brought out, yet blended and subdued, the colours on the marble, till they had a softness and harmony" such as can only be witnessed on the shores of the Aegean. Yet that was Newman's way, Newman's legacy. He caught in his prose the clear air which one May morning on a Malvern hillside in a summer season was caught by Langland as it was to be caught and handed on by Hopkins in his "skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow" or his "rose moles all in stipple upon trout that swim."

Here are observations of God's grandeur, reoriented in language and emancipated by time and yet making a passage of centuries seem naught. John Gerard's description of his first landing in England is not unlike some pages in *The Power and the Glory* with its Dryden epigraph:

Th' inclosure narrow'd; the sagacious power
Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour.

There is an echo of the Elizabethan narrative: "Every track led up to the house — as we knew at once when the dogs started to bark." Again Gerard's interest in an apostolate connected with the aristocracy, the great estates and large houses, is perhaps not unlike some of the sentiments expressed some weeks in *The Tablet*. At the other extreme, in the monthly, *The Catholic Worker*, you will find sentiments nearer to Langland — yet both weekly and monthly go to show the continued width, diversity — in a word, catholicity, of Catholicism — in the world of modern journalism alone. Or remember the date 1796 — the year Mrs. Inchbald published *A Simple Story* in which poor Miss Milner finds that she is in love with her guardian who turns out to be a priest. See how honor resolves this affair and contrast it, say, to a 1951 novel, almost out of memory — *The Passionate Shepherd* in which a similar theme is the plot. Or again think of the fusing between the medieval rose-symbol with that of fire and the atom bomb — so memorably celebrated in the poetry of Edith Sitwell. "What may this be?" asked Dame Julian of a little thing, "the quantity of a hazel nut" and "as round as a ball." And it was answered her thus: "It is all that is made." For you see the modern poet, like Dame Julian in her *Divine Revelations*, is faced with a discovery — the splitting of the atom — which may prove as explosive or shattering to thought as did the discovery that the world was not flat or

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that, after all, Galileo was right. For the artist who is prepared to fall upon his knees, it may seem now more than ever that the world hangs on by the Grace of God.

The present, we are told almost daily by statesmen, is a turning-point in history where atomic or hydrogen energy used for war may destroy mankind, but which if used for peaceful ends may provide a means of re-charging those parts of the world's soil where expected overpopulation in ten years' time might bring famine. And perhaps under the arches of some midland station at this very moment a writer who happens to be a Catholic is picking up his pen. The pattern is clear for tracing. Is not atomic or hydrogen energy an answer, other than contraception, to future famine in the Far East or, perhaps one day, nearer home? Naturally my imaginary poet or novelist will not speak thus categorically or *ex cathedra*, preferring the artist's way which is always to suggest that "your guess is as good as mine." None the less the hint will have been dropped — pick it up who may. In other words, he will have fulfilled Newman's hope:

But there is nothing of special courage, nothing of personal magnanimity in a Catholic making light of the world and beginning to preach to it, though it turn its face from him. He knows the nature and the habits of the world; and it is his immemorial way of dealing with it; he does but act according to his vocation; he would not be a Catholic, did he act otherwise. He knows whose vessel he has entered; it is the bark of Peter. When the greatest of the Romans was in an open boat on the Adriatic, he said to the terrified boatmen, "*Caesarem vebis et fortunam Caesaris*, Caesar is your freight and Caesar's fortune." What he said in presumption we can repeat in faith of that boat in which Christ once sat and preached. We have not chosen to have fear about it; we have not entered it to escape out of it; no, but to go forth in it upon the flood of sin and unbelief, which would sink any other craft. . . . We act according to our name: Catholics are at home in every time and place, in every state of society, in every class of the community, in every stage of cultivation.

Hopkins and Donne: 'Mystic' and Metaphysical

BY RICHARD COANDA

IN THE fires of literary discussion the names of certain poets become inevitably linked. Of Hopkins, Claude Colleer Abbott asserted: "If there need be any comparison with another poet, it should be with Donne"; and he summed up their likenesses by declaring: "Both are philosophers and pioneers. . . . Neither poet is remarkable for humility." Despite many similar, if more random, remarks by other critics, the total comment on the relationship of these poets is slim. David Morris in *The Poetry of Hopkins and Eliot in Light of the Donne Tradition* discusses diction, metrics, syntax, recurring themes, and imagery but leaves many deeper problems unprobed. I wish here to delve more critically into the chief resemblances between these men as "mystic" and metaphysical poets.

A mystic is one who loses or dissolves himself in the direct knowledge of God attained not by ordinary sensing or brainwork but by sudden insight or intuition. The essence of this "infused contemplation" is, as Père de Grandmaison affirms, the felt contact of God's presence, experimental and immediate without the intrusion of images or of the discursive reason. Poets, like mystics, may be contemplatives and may share some of the same feelings. Hopkins described poetic inspiration as "a mood of great, abnormal in fact, mental acuteness," but there is a large difference between poetic insight and mystical illumination. The mystical experience, as Helen White pointed out in *The Metaphysical Poets*, is more rich, intense, concentrated, and holds a wider range of implication than poetry affords. The reason is that poets deal with fleeting and fragmentary delights whereas mystics refer to the center of spiritual reality, God Himself.

It is possible to be both poet and mystic, just as it is possible to be both poet and lover. But it is not likely that a man will be both at the same time. The raptures of mysticism, like the raptures of love, must be recollected in tranquillity so that the poet can dominate his materials and shape them into communicable form. Mystical poetry, then, is that poetry which is so rich, intense, God-centered and beyond the realm of ordinary human experience that its author must have been a mystic in order to write it. There are not many mystic poets. The requirements of this delicate, difficult role are stringent. The performer must balance between two worlds, the spiritual and the natural, and maintain high poetry and contemplative piety in one breath. St. John of the Cross, Jacopone da Todi, Henry Vaughan and the author of the *Bhagavad-Gita*

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are poets who must have been mystics in order to write what they wrote. But do Donne and Hopkins also qualify for this title?

Critics from Edmund Gosse to George Williamson have voted Donne the mystical halo, solemnly chorusing that English mysticism "has always since the reign of Elizabeth spoken in the voice of Donne" (Gosse), that his poetry is "essentially mystical" (Mary Paton Ramsay), that in some personal crisis he had acquired an insight "and became a mystic" (Louis Bredvold), that the trinity of his genius is "his mysticism, logic, and passionate thinking" (Williamson), and that as a mystic he saw "all material things as symbols of an inner reality" (Evelyn Simpson).

But certain elements in Donne's poetry—morbidity, egocentricity, self-thwarting—are antagonistic to mysticism. "In whatever sunny garden," said Dowden, "and at whatever banquet Donne sits, he discerns in air the dark scythesman of that great picture attributed to Orcagna." The morbidity of his deadly *Meditations* has its counterpart in the Holy Sonnets, which ask "If poysinous mineralls . . ./Cannot be damn'd, alas, why should I be?" and exclaim "Spit in my face yee Jewes . . ." Self-thwarting and tension also complicate his religious poems. Grierson found in them not love of God but the effort to realize His majesty. Donne suffered long from his sense of a barrier which his transgressions raised between God and himself and viewed with equal distaste his sins of the flesh and the dreadful need of discontinuing them. His self-awareness by its persistence is transformed to self-centeredness. In his religious poems he alone is the center of his thoughts. In "Farewell to Love," as Helen White points out, he refuses to surrender himself to a blazing vision, not because he considers himself unworthy of it, but because he fears the heat will burn him.

In the fiery stress of his tortured, troubled vision, Donne fails to synthesize the rival impulses of flesh and soul. Yet T. S. Eliot thought him a remarkable bridge-builder: "In Donne, there is a manifest fissure between thought and sensibility, a chasm which in his poetry he bridged in his own way, which was not the way of medieval poetry. His learning is just information suffused with emotion, or combined with emotion not essentially relevant to it." There is a difference between a synthesis and a bridge. In Donne we have a manufactured link, in Hopkins a synthesis.

"In his almost total blindness to the beauty of the natural world he reveals a lack of that receptivity," said Helen Gardner of Donne, "that capacity for disinterested joy which is one of the marks of the spiritual man. This differentiates him from a poet with whom he is often compared, Gerard Manley Hopkins."

While a few of his devotional poems, such as "Batter my heart," have a seemingly unsurpassable intensity and concentration, most of his religious lyrics are inferior to his love poems and elegies. There is much surprise in Donne's

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poetry, as in Hopkins', but little of the wonder characteristic of mystical illumination. Donne even in his best work remains too egocentric to attain mystical heights; the states of being described in his poetry are confined to the realm of ordinary human experience. He is merely a poet sometimes religious.

Hopkins, like Donne, has often been hailed as a mystic. Gerald Lahey, his first biographer, used the term "dark night of the soul" in reference to Hopkins' spiritual desolation. More recently, F. R. Leavis remarked that a passage from "The Wreck of the Deutschland" is concerned to evoke "a sense of mystical identification." It is not surprising that critics of Donne and Hopkins should employ the term "mystic" so loosely that it seems to have no clear definition; even such a scholar of mysticism as Evelyn Underhill is capable of using the term freely, as when she lumps Blake, Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Whitman together and calls them mystic poets.

Nor is it surprising that a number of critics insist that the word "mystic" should be used strictly or not at all. Martin D'Arcy, S.J., in his Foreword to *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Priest and Poet* stated, "I am so glad that Dr. Pick dismisses the superficial talk of mystic 'dark nights' when discussing the sombre sonnets of Hopkins' last years. They obviously fall into what is well known as the season of dry and dark faith, a season during which most good people are deprived of all the old sensible delights they formerly enjoyed when thinking of God and all His saints."

There is gloom and suffering in Hopkins but not the morbidity which permeates Donne. Unlike Donne, he is capable of being in the same breath sensuous and devout; to see this one may compare Hopkins' "Epithalamion" with the nuptial songs of Donne, which are *sensual* and devout, but not both at once. Yet his thoughts, like Donne's, too often circle around himself. His own hand consistently intrudes into his highest fervors. "Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise/You, jaded, let be," he murmurs. His selfhood seems never to have dissolved in the warm grasp of God. In "Henry Purcell" he admits: "It is the forged feature finds me; it is the rehearsal/Of own, of abrupt self"; and in "As kingfishers catch fire" he affirms: "Each mortal thing does one and the same:/ . . . *myself* it speaks and spells." Poetic and Scotist and wonderful though this is, it is contrary to mystic vision. Hopkins saw God reflected as if by mirrors in nature and man but never seems to have seized Him directly, and sometimes life itself he caught only in reflections: "I that die these deaths . . . in smooth spoons spy life's masque mirrored." His divine poetry attains richness and concentration more constantly than Donne's, because his religious poems, unlike Donne's, were love poems as well. But his self-awareness prevents their being truly God-centered, and his religious experiences do not seem to reach beyond the range of the mass of mankind.

Hopkins' greater success in the devotional strain may be a hint that he came

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closer than Donne to becoming a mystic. That he was at least a near-mystic is suggested by the first stanza of "The Wreck of the Deutschland": "and dost thou touch me afresh?/Over again I feel thy finger and find thee." Donne does not appear to have been even this close to God: he *begs* Him to batter his heart. Whether Hopkins was a better feigner than Donne (a religious poet feigns or re-enacts his spiritual experiences just as a love poet feigns or relives his emotional experiences) because of a closer contact with God or because of a higher concentration of prosodic techniques is difficult to determine. Hopkins said the Terrible Sonnets "came unbidden and against my will"; perhaps the aging Donne ran out of the lyric inspiration which blesses younger poets. Whatever the cause, neither seems to have lost himself sufficiently to achieve the spiritual height of Vaughan's "I saw eternity the other night/Like a great ring of pure and endless light," or Jacopone da Todi's "Aperte son le porte facta ha conjunzione, et è in possessione de tutto quel de Dio." The root of the trouble was most likely as Abbott described it: "Neither poet [was] remarkable for humility."

THAT both wrote in the same poetic tradition, however, is hardly a subject for debate. They resemble each other in brain power, emotional richness, candor, complexity, wrenched meter and syntax, and extensively far-fetched imagery. Though he probably knew little of Donne, Hopkins read the poets who followed Donne. But whether "metaphysical" is the best word to describe this tradition, and what precisely its characteristics are, have been matters of dispute.

Grierson said its distinctive characteristic is "the blend of passionate feeling and paradoxical ratiocination." Metaphysical wit is intellectual rather than verbal, its imagery learned, the evolution of its lyrics argumentative and subtle, and "the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination" its greatest achievement.

John Crowe Ransom in redefining metaphysical poetry thought it distinctive because it brings "a single extended image to bear the whole weight of the conceptual structure . . ." Allen Tate expanded Ransom's definition by considering a poem's centrality not "a single extended image" but a "development of imagery by logical extension" in which the logical order is "an Ariadne's thread that the poet will not permit us to lose . . ." Cleanth Brooks elaborated Tate's concept by stressing the functional character of metaphor: "We cannot remove the comparisons from their poems, as we might remove ornaments and illustrations attached to a sentiment, without demolishing the poem. The comparison is the poem in a structural sense."

Leonard Unger tried to demolish Ransom, Tate, and Brooks in a single swoop by retorting that a thread of opposing attitudes, not one of metaphor, unifies Donne's "Canonization" and other of his best work. But close reading reveals attitudes in each stanza combining to form a latent metaphor which in

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the last stanza becomes explicit: love is greater treasure than wealth, learning or position in court; love is more peaceful than storms or litigation; it is more mysterious than the Phoenix riddle; it is more holy than the whole world; finally, it is as sanctified as saintliness. The same process of attitudes becoming latent equations which coalesce to form a dominant metaphor can be found in "Twickenham Garden" and other poems which Unger considers exceptions to this rule.

Hopkins' use of the Donnesque conceit, his "development of imagery by logical extension," is even more elaborate, and harder to unravel, than Donne's. In his belief that there are "excellences higher than clearness at first reading," Hopkins wrote poems which explode into sudden meaningfulness after repeated perusal. If, as I. A. Richards observed, the reader could slide lightly over the page, the extremely complex response would not have time to develop. The purpose of these long-spun analogies is not only to unify the whole of experience but also, in the words of T. E. Hulme, "to get out the exact curve of the feeling or thing you want to express." Sometimes Hopkins slipped his metaphysical burden into his titles: "The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe," "The Windhover: To Christ our Lord," "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire." At other times one must read closely to see what he is getting at. In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" he compares his sudden insight to a sloe bursting in the mouth and, more complexly, both to a stream running down a Welsh hill and to twisted rope. In "The Windhover" he grew so charged and ingenious over a falcon, which he compared to Christ, to a knight and to himself, that numerous explications cannot exhaust the poem. Both Hopkins and Donne reach highest pitch when their imagery is most ornate, and both lose power when complexity is lacking.

Donne's intensity depends largely upon his terseness and the element of surprise. Hopkins adds to these the quality of ambiguity which gives him multiple layers of meaning. The word "buckle" in "The Windhover" still incites contention among critics. And in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," a poem about the mind grappling with the darkness of despair, the word "damask" could mean damascene-work in the trademark of a tool blade, ornamentation on a Damascus steel sword blade, or a red color which when combined with black might suggest dragon's blood grotesquely spattered on a weapon, while sheathless and shelterless "thoughts against thoughts in groans grind."

Donne's poetry, like Hopkins', is best when it emotionally blends analysis and realistic illustration, whimsey and devotion, in order to communicate not his reflections upon an experience but the concrete experience itself:

Eternall God, (for whom who ever dare
Seeke new expressions, doe the circle square,
And thrust into strait corners of poore wit

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Thee, who art cornerless and infinite)

I would but bless thy Name, not name thee now.

Despite his emotional complexity and versatility, however, Donne does not blend opposite emotions; he preserves their identity and impenetrability, as Helen White says, and plays one against the other to evoke multiple levels of sensation. In this he resembles the *Pearl* poet who in one breath expressed delight, amazement, and fear upon finding his lost daughter. Hopkins rather than juggling rival attitudes goes a step farther: he *fuses* his contrasting emotions as well as all other poetic ingredients and makes them interact and fiercely explode so that, as in "The Windhover" where brute beauty, valor, act, air, pride and plume dazzlingly buckle, all reality spills into a blinding surge of insight.

Donne has won plaudits for sharp and particular diction and for appreciation of sensuous detail, but he by no means approaches the extreme inscape of Hopkins. A pseudo-Thomist rather than a neo-Scotist, Donne's philosophic impetus was toward the abstract and general rather than the individual and particular. One could say he universalized the concrete rather than concretized the universal. Though at times his precise diction goes to the lengths of a coinage or adaptation, he adheres as a rule to a normal vocabulary, enriched somewhat by terminology from pseudo-scientific lore. His syntax, too, despite inversions and compressions for emphasis, usually follows the movement of talk. Hopkins' diction, conversational though it is in rhythm and tone, exemplifies his dictum that "Poetry must have, down to its least separable part, an individualizing touch." His precision is extreme. He uses not only the exact word but unusual meanings of ordinary words, words themselves unusual, dialect words, coinages, and original word-compounds. His wrenched syntax and sprung rhythm are also part of his effort to inscape.

Through Donne's pages jostle types of the times—merchant, rake, soldier—and knowledge of such various crafts as coinage, navigation and hanging. But Hopkins had a keener eye and a larger love of detail. Michael Moloney said that Donne "chose virtually to eliminate sensorily perceived beauty from his poetry while placing an undue emphasis on sensuous thought. He acted as he did, I am convinced, not because of a super-intellectualism which scorned the poet's normal materials and methods, but because of a diseased and distorted aesthetic perspective to which all things corporeal took on the aspect of evil." Hopkins, however, crowds sensuous beauty not only into such lush lyrics as "Hurrahing in Harvest" and "Pied Beauty" but even in his sad sonnets where banks and brakes are laced with fretty chervil and birds build even if the poet thinks he does not build nor "breed one work that wakes." Anyone who has fallen on the grass in Marvell's "Garden" will recognize this blend of sensuousness and devotion as a living part of the metaphysical tradition.

Critics often remark that Donne seems to think with his body and to feel

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with his mind. But this may be just his desperate means of trying to bridge his cleavage between flesh and soul. Hopkins, with his sharp perception of inscape, "the dearest freshness deep down things," fuses thought and feeling into powerful unity. His use of synaesthesia hints that his senses were unusually interconnected. In "Spring" he describes the *song* of a thrush first in terms of taste and touch and then in terms of sight and touch. His words and phrases not only stir the intellect, imagination and emotions but also reach into our viscera and bring a tingle to our finger-ends. As Elizabeth Phare said, "he never separates soul and body, never casts off his flesh like a garment in an attempt to emerge all spirit. . . . He was certainly exempted from the danger from which Donne in his *Litany* prays to be delivered:

From thinking us all soul, neglecting thus
Our mutual duties, Lord, deliver us."

Both poets took a Heraclitean view of the world. Donne probably favored the Heraclitean figure because it reflected his obsession with mortality. For Hopkins, an acute sense of movement was, as Arthur Mizener noted, "the heart of reality, and the dramatic balance of movements the thing he responded to most; it was, for him, fulfillment." Of his poem "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection" Elizabeth Phare remarked: "It is perhaps worth noting as symptomatic of the pleasure which he takes in movement and his dread and dislike of immobility, that the stone to which he compares man's soul, the stone which signifies permanence, hardness, indestructability, is a diamond." Hopkins' resurrection poem, like Donne's "At the round earth's imagin'd corners," begins with movement on a grand scale and ends with diminutive motion. Neither poet caressed immobility except in his image of the First Cause or the Unmoved Mover: Hopkins pictured Christ as a magnificent kestrel hovering on the wind; Donne regarded Truth as standing securely on a hill.

The note of anguish quivers in their later lyrics. Hopkins seems to have found satisfaction in admitting himself to be unhappy; his poems were a solace in grief. Donne portrays painfully the dilemma of the natural man impelled to be spiritual. Both poets emphasize the personal pronoun. Donne cried:

Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you 'enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.

And Hopkins begged: "Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain." Both lament their woes. Donne declared, "I am the man which have affliction scene," and Hopkins prophesied, "Pitched past pitch of grief,/More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring."

Both poets jammed the sonnet form with unprecedented weight and richness,

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proving what incalculable strain that tensile, ductile structure can bear. In "I am a little world made cunningly" Donne mirrors the cosmos in microcosmic man, and in "At the round earth's imagin'd corners" all creation is represented in the space of fourteen lines. Hopkins in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" pictures night as the vast "womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all" and explores in "No worst, there is none" the vaulting geography of man's mind. Both use ambiguity: Donne's puns like Hopkins' homophones multiply the enrichment. Donne uses heavy monosyllables and strong secondary stresses to weight and lengthen his lines in order to wrest the movement of the sonnet to fit his own tormented vision. Hopkins uses sprung rhythm, counterpoint, alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, half-rhyme, and consonantal chime to add weight and scope to his phonetic structure.

Their best religious verse is most similar: Donne prefigures Hopkins, and Hopkins writes like a nineteenth-century Donne. The beginning of Hopkins' "Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend/With thee" parallels the sestet of Donne's "If poysonous mineralls" ("But who am I that dare dispute with thee?") and the rest of the poem ("Wert thou my enemy . . . /How wouldst thou worse . . . thwart me?") resembles Donne's "Thou hast made me, And shall thy worke decay?" Hopkins' "No worst, there is none" as sharply contrasts with and resembles Donne's "Death be not proud" as pessimism contrasts with and resembles desperate optimism. But the two poems that go together like the two sides of a coin are Donne's "Batter my heart" and Hopkins' "Carriage Comfort." Donne pleads: "That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, and bend/Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new" while Hopkins having been battered, cries: "why wouldst thou . . . scan/With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? . . . /That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear." The felt thought or dominant metaphor of both is strikingly similar: the idea of God's ravishing, or wrestling with, a recalcitrant sinner in order to humble and cleanse him. Both poems are rich with alliteration, assonance, rhyme, parallel verbs, caesuras, interjections, paradox, terseness, irregular meter. Both reach the apex of religious and metaphysical sonneteering. Despite the unlikeness of their lesser lyrics, these poems show both at their distinctive best, and when at their best the two are most alike, near-mystic and quite metaphysical.

Influences Shaping the Poetic Imagery of Merton

BY SISTER ROSEMARIE JULIE

IN ORDER to point out several strong influences in the life of Thomas Merton which, taken together, have probably helped to form his imagery, suggestions will be extracted directly from the writings of the poet himself, especially as revealed in his autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948). The particular emphasis will be on the development of imagery as shown by comparison of earlier with later poems, and the endeavor will be to point out factors that may have induced imagery in each of the two periods. Because his autobiography demonstrated that Merton's preoccupations have always been philosophical and literary, it would seem that the factors influencing his poetry have come largely from these fields. Literary influences will be considered first.

Obviously Merton came early under the influence of symbolism and imagism. At the age of fifteen, he was attending Oakham and learning much from his cultured god-father:

It was from them . . . god-father and friends that I was to discover all the names that people most talked about in modern writing: Hemingway, Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Evelyn Waugh, Céline with his *Voyage au Bout de la Nuit*, Gide and all the rest, except that they did not bother much with poets. I heard about T. S. Eliot from the English Master at Oakham who had just come down from Cambridge and read me aloud "The Hollow Men."

Anyone who considers this group of writers with an eye on imagery, realizes that besides prose, most of these men wrote poetry and that their poetry was in one way or another affected by symbolist or imagist theory.

Symbolist and surrealist tendencies in Merton's poetry have frequently been observed by magazine reviewers and critics. Of course, the word, "symbolism," is used by writers with varied meanings, but taken broadly as a literary term, the word connotes the representation of a reality on one level of reference by a corresponding reality on another.

Though some critics still describe the imagery of Merton's latest work as symbolist, a careful comparison of three poems selected from *The Tears of the Blind Lions* (1947-1949) with the first seven published poems convinces one that Merton is much less conscious later of Symbolism as the particular method of a school of poets and more concerned with symbolism in its specific and more traditional meaning as defined above. The early poems, however, do

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clearly show the poet's attempt to approximate Symbolist ideals as proposed by the poets of the school of Symbolism. The short "Poem: 1939" is cited in full as an example:

Poem: 1939

The white, the silent stars
Drive their wheeling ring,
Crane down out of the tall black air
To hear the swanworld sing.
But the long, deep knife is in,
(O bitter, speechless earth)
Throat grows tight, voice thin,
Blood gets no regrowth,
As night devours our days,
Death puts out our eyes,
Towns dry up and flare like tongues
But no voice prophecies.

Here, Merton tries, as did the Symbolist poets, to replace directness with suggestive indirectness, to avoid description for its own sake, and to give images not only objectivity but also spiritual value; these were methods of the Symbolists. The indirect reference to the burning bush seen by Moses is a case in point:

Towns dry up and flare like tongues
But no voice prophecies.

On the other hand, lines from "The Quickenings of St. John the Baptist" (1947-1949) contain imagery which has retained its suggestiveness without indirectness. Here the imagery aims at a clearly defined symbolic meaning — the action of grace upon the unborn St. John:

How did you see her in the eyeless dark?
What secret syllable
Woke your young faith to the mad truth
That an unborn baby could be washed in the
Spirit of God?

Merton's early surrealist attempt to clear away all the clutter of familiar association of words and ideas in the hope that space might be made in human consciousness for material hitherto unused in literature (i.e., relationships of automatic association) is also evident in his first poems. The surrealist tries to synthesize the experiences of the conscious and unconscious mind, and the "Song" (1939) quoted here might well be considered a surrealist description of the mind of the poet as he contemplates the aim of surrealism:

Song
from Crossportion's Pastoral
The bottom of the sea has come

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And builded in my noiseless room
The fishes' and the mermaids' home,
Whose it is most, most hell to be
Out of the heavy-hanging sea
And in the thin, thin changeable air
Or unroom sleep some other where;
But play their coral violins
Where waters most lock music in:
The bottom of my room, the sea.
Full of voiceless curtaindeeps
There mermaid somnambules come sleep
Where fluted half-lights show the way,
And there, lost orchestras play
And down the many quarterlights come
To the dim mirth of my aquadrome:
The bottom of my sea, the room.

Though the nature of the poem does not spring from logical order, yet the verses communicate an interesting description of the mind as thoughts come swimming through in the manner of fish; some thoughts find no welcome in the mind, and those leave "to unroom sleep some other where." Other thoughts enter and go to sleep in the darkened regions of the mind, etc. Any conscious effects achieved in the poem would be attributable to the conscious mind working upon the raw material supplied by the unconscious in an effort to synthesize the two mental areas.

Obviously, here, Merton has formed new associations in imagery and he is not concerned with the controls set by reason. As a surrealist, the poet suspends the conscious mind in order to release for expression repressed ideas and images; consequently, the poem cannot be explained according to conventional norms. Again the "Song for Our Lady of Cobre" (1940) is an effective use of the same technique. Merton himself describes the composition of this poem:

But while I was sitting on the terrace of the hotel, eating lunch, La Caridad del Cobre had a word to say to me. She handed me an idea for a poem that formed so easily and smoothly and spontaneously in my mind that all I had to do was finish eating and go up to my room and type it out, almost without a correction.

So the poem turned out to be both what she had to say to me and what I had to say to her. It was a song for La Caridad del Cobre, and it was, as far as I was concerned, something new, and the first real poem I had ever written, or anyway the one I liked best. It pointed the way to many other poems; it opened the gate, and set me travelling on a certain and direct track that was to last me several years.

The poem said:

The white girls lift their heads like trees,
The black girls go
Reflected like flamingoes in the street.

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The white girls sing as shrill as water,
The black girls talk as quiet as clay.
The white girls open their arms like clouds,
The black girls close their eyes like wings:
Angels bow down like bells,
Angels look up like toys,

Because the heavenly stars
Stand in a ring:
And all the pieces of the mosaic, earth,
Get up and fly away like birds.

When I went back to Havana, I found out something else . . . the real uselessness of what I had been half deliberately looking for: the visions in the ceiba trees. And this experience opened another door, not a way to a kind of writing but a way into . . . a world that was out of this world of ours entirely and which transcended it infinitely, and which was not a world, but which was God Himself.

LATER, after Merton had entered the monastery, he faced a problem which undoubtedly accounts for a change in the imagery of his poetry. He describes his dilemma in the essay, "Poetry and the Contemplative Life" (1947):

. . . if one's religious superiors make it a matter of formal obedience to pursue one's art, for some special purpose like the good of souls . . . we can console ourselves with St. Thomas Aquinas that it is more meritorious to share the fruits of contemplation with others than it is merely to enjoy them ourselves. And certainly, when it comes to communicating some idea of the delights of contemplation, the poet is, of all men, the one who is least at a loss for a means to express what is essentially inexpressible.

Because the aim of surrealism is primarily "expression" — let communication result if it will, but it is secondary — it is not surprising to find the later Merton as monk and apostle turning from surrealism toward a kind of poetry that may better be described as "imagistic" and a technique more suited to communication. Though not all of Merton's late poetry is imagistic, "The Reader" (1947-1949) is an effective illustration of this tendency:

The Reader

Lord, when the clock strikes
Telling the time with cold tin
And I sit hooded in this lectern
Waiting for the monks to come,
I see the red cheeses and the bowls
All smile with milk in ranks upon their tables.
Light fills my proper globe
(I have won light to read by
With a little, tinkling chain)

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And the monks come down the cloister
With robes as voluble as water.
I do not see them but I hear their waves.
It is winter, and my hands prepare
To turn the pages of the saints:
And to the trees Thy moon has frozen on the windows
My tongue shall sing Thy Scripture.
Then the monks pause upon the step
(With me here in this lectern
And Thee there on Thy crucifix)
And gather little pearls of water on their fingers' ends
Smaller than this my psalm.

Here the exact, almost naked images of the "red cheeses, and bowls/All smile with milk in ranks upon the tables" has a note of bareness which pleases at once imagism and monasticism.

The poet's concern with the notion that the supernatural is the normal mode of existence for the Christian has very probably been responsible for the evolving of a new and more logical image pattern discernible in each of the three later poems in this comparison. Merton introduces the high spiritual theme of these poems with purely natural description presented on an objective plane as in "The Quickening":

Why do you fly from the drowned shores of Galilee,
From the sands and the lavender water?

In the same poem, the poet gradually surmounts nature, reaching the rarified air of the spirit:

Oh burning joy!
What seas of life were planted by that voice!
With what new sense
Did your wise heart receive her Sacrament,
And know her cloistered Christ?

The implication of this approach through imagery is that the role of nature in the life of grace is to elevate the soul to contemplate the Maker. Unless a reader fully appreciates the philosophy of the poet, it is only too easy to condemn imagery for a lack of relevance or unity. For that reason it is impossible to avoid the philosophical aspect of imagery in this analysis.

In addition to the probable importance of symbolism, imagism, and surrealism in the development of Merton's imagery, several references to the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century indicate that the images of Donne, Crashaw, and Marvell have influenced the verse-making of the convert-poet: "Then, of course, I was reading the metaphysical poets once again — especially Crashaw — and studying his life, too, and his conversion."

Again Merton speaks of Crashaw: "I was thinking of preparing an article on Crashaw which perhaps I would send to T. S. Eliot for his *Criterion*."

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Then the poet acknowledges his debt to Marvell:

In November 1938, I acquired a sudden facility for rough, raw Skeltonic verses — and that lasted about a month, and died. They were not much, but one of them took a prize which it did not deserve. But now I had many kinds of sounds ringing in my ears and they sometimes asked to get on paper. When their rhythms and tones followed Andrew Marvell, the results were best. I always liked Marvell; he did not mean as much to me as Donne or Crashaw (when Crashaw wrote well) but nevertheless there was something about his temper for which I felt a special personal attraction. His moods were more clearly my own than Crashaw's or even Donne's.

According to Grierson, the word "metaphysical," as generally applied to poets of the seventeenth century and to later poets who have imitated them, refers to the more intellectual, less verbal character of wit in a poet like Donne rebelling against the conceits of the Elizabethans; the psychological twist of the conceits; the technical imagery; the syllogistic and "subtle evolution" of lyrics; finally, the "peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination" which is the greatest achievement of the metaphysical poets. Impassioned concentration is always likely to develop into an analysis of the experience which aroused the strong feeling.

Critics have noticed the outcropping of metaphysical images of this sort in Merton's poetry. For example, one finds in "Dark Morning," (1939):

Water wades among the building
to the prisoner's curled ear

Through all the coiling passages of
(Curled ear) my prison:

This kind of anatomical conceit was often used by the metaphysical poets, e.g., Thomas Traherne's "News":

So much it did my heart enflame
'Twas wont to call my Soul into mine Ear.

The cosmic conceit is used by John Donne in "The Sun Rising":

Whose heart is his Germany
Fevered with anger.

Merton parallels this in "Dark Morning":

She is all States and all Princes I
Nothing else is.

His use of a very technical image in a poem likewise echoes typical metaphysical usage. The poet makes successful use of this medium in "The Hymn for the Feast of Duns Scotus" (1947-1949) when he compares his flight toward God to an express train:

And lo! God, my God!

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I run in Thy swift ways, Thy straightest rails
Until my life becomes Thy life and sails
or rides like an express!

Back in 1612 John Donne wove into "A Valedictorian" a famous technical image, this time a compass:

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two
Thy soul the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other doe.

AS YOUNG Merton moved toward Catholicism, he began to study the works of Hopkins, whom critics consider another influence and whom Merton himself realized to be a challenge for him. He writes:

The other loan was that of a book. The Headmaster came along, one day, and gave me a little book of poems. I looked at the name on the back. "Gerard Manley Hopkins." I had never heard of him. But I opened the book, and read the "Starlight Night" and the Harvest poem and the most lavish and elaborate early poems. I noticed that the man was a Catholic and a priest and, what is more, a Jesuit.

I could not make up my mind whether I liked his verse or not.

It was elaborate and tricky and in places it was a little lush and overdone, I thought. Yet it was original and had a lot of vitality and music too deep for me, and I could not make anything out of them at all.

Nevertheless, I accepted the poet, with reservations. I gave the book back to the Head, and thanked him, and never altogether forgot Hopkins, though I was not to read him again for several years.

Later he says: "My reading became more and more Catholic. I became absorbed in the poetry of Hopkins and in his notebooks — that poetry which had only impressed me a little six years before."

By 1938 Merton had decided to do research work on Hopkins:

When I wasn't sitting on this balcony doing nothing, I was in the room, in the deepest armchair, studying the letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins and trying to figure out various manuals on prosody and covering little white index cards with notes. For it was my plan to write a Ph.D. dissertation on Hopkins.

Hopkins' images were original in the use of compounded words packed with richness of epithet and analogy. Hopkins achieved astonishing poetic compression by ellipsis and by a studied use of imagery having several levels of meaning. Critics find some of these traits in Merton; one Hopkins-like image is contained in a line from "Song" quoted earlier. Here Merton compares his mind to a room whose floor or subconscious area is the sea, in which voices are drowned in the depths of curtain-like walls of water:

The bottom of my room, the sea
Full of voiceless curtaindeeps.

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The compound "curtaindeep" recalls the Jesuit poet's combinations "chestnut-falls" in "Pied Beauty" or "river-rounded" in "Duns Scotus's Oxford."

In Merton's late works the Hopkins note persists; take, for example, "The Hymn":

Word, the whole universe swells with Thy wide-open speed,
Father, the world bursts, breaks, huge Spirit, with Thy might
Then land, sea, and wind swing
While God sings victory, sings victory
In the blind day of that defeat.

Though his rhythm is distinctly different from that of Merton, similar images sprang from Hopkins' pen in "God's Grandeur":

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. . . .

BESIDES the rather complex literary influences which have helped to shape the imagery of Merton, there are also certain theological notions which recur in the meaning structure of this verse and which are related to his choice of images and their structure.

A comparison of imagery, reflecting the philosophical attitude of the early poems with imagery conveying the more advanced ascetical point of view found in late poems reveals definite change in imagery. This fact is evidenced in two poems: "An Argument of the Passion of Christ," written in 1940 before Merton entered Gethsemani, and "The Hymn for the Feast of Duns Scotus," penned in 1947, six years after Merton became a Trappist. The first poem reveals the penitential young convert staring at his past in wide-eyed amazement as he realizes how his sins have injured the Redeemer. "In those days," to use Merton's oft-repeated phrase, the Psalmist's cry became his own in very truth, "Peccatum meum contra me est semper." "The Hymn for the Feast of Duns Scotus," on the other hand, depicts the poet in a much more mature spiritual state. Though penance is still basic, it is no longer an end; it has been the road by which the poet travelled toward God, and now with the abandon of a child, Merton "runs" beside His Father and "swings on the grasp" of His love.

"An Argument of the Passion of Christ" seems to be an autobiographical meditation. The following excerpts show the poet's regret for his wild youth:

The furious prisoner of the womb,
Rebellious, in the jaws of life,
Learns from the mother's conscious flesh,
The secret laws of blood and strife.

The demon raging at the breast,
Arrayed in cries, and crowned with tears,

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Has sucked the magics of the east,
The doubts of the philosophers.

Until we scan the wastes of death,
And wind blows through our cage of bones;
Sight leaves the sockets of the skull,
And love runs mad among the stones!

My adolescence, like the wolf,
Fled to the edges of the gulf
And searched the ruins of the night
To hide from Calvary's iron light:
But in the burning jaws of day
I saw the barren Judas Tree;
For to the caverns of my pride
Judas had come, and there was paid!

The spirit of agitation permeating the poem results from the use of such images as "The furious prisoner of the womb"; "the demon raging at the breast"; "love runs mad among the stones"; "my adolescence . . . fled . . . /to hide from Calvary's iron light."

How relieving are the peace and joy of the "Hymn for the Feast of Duns Scotus" after the agonized cries heard above. This latter piece also introduces another writer who probably exerts the most important influence, both philosophical and literary, upon Merton today — St. John of the Cross. Though the poet began to study his works in 1938, the full message of the Spanish mystic was not heard until later:

So at great cost I bought the first volume of the works of St. John of the Cross and sat in the room on Ferry Street and turned over the first pages, underlining places here and there with pencil. But it turned out that it would take more than that to make me a saint; because these words I underlined, although they amazed and dazzled me with their import, were all too simple for me to understand. They were too naked, too stripped of all duplicity and compromise for my complexity, perverted by many appetites. However, I am glad that I was at least able to recognize them, obscurely, as worthy of the greatest respect.

Recently Thomas Merton wrote, "The life of grace is not merely natural, it is supernatural. For the Christian the supernatural itself is the 'normal'"; accordingly, the "Hymn" begins with an exact picture of an autumn scene, the description having again the imagistic quality noted before:

On a day in fall, when the high winds trouble
the country
I visit the borders of my world, and see the
colored hills.
And walk upon their coasts

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The woods and grasses tumble like a sea:
Their waters run after the dry shores
Of the path made for my feet.
And I open the book of Duns Scotus,
To learn the reason for theology.

This is the book whose vision is not its own end,
Whose words are the ways of love, whose term
is Trinity:
Three Who is One Who is Love.

Then the poet rises to imagery like that of St. John of the Cross:

One, because One is the reason for loving
And the One Love loved. But Three
Are the Three Lovers Who love and are loved
And are Love.

Four centuries ago St. John sang in "The Most Holy Trinity":

In dignity and might
Coequal with them both,
Three Persons, and one Love,
The Three are One.

In the next stanza of Merton's "Hymn" the theme is expanded:

One is the Love we love, and love for:
But Three are those we love and
One our Three Lovers, loving One another.
Their One Love for One another is their Love for us,
And One is our Love for all Three and all One
And for us, on earth, brothers, one another!

And of old St. John of the Cross praised the Trinity similarly:

And in the Three one Love,
One Lover makes of All:
The Lover is the Love
In whom each doth live.

But suddenly in the "Hymn" Merton shows himself a modern as he shifts to imagery technical in origin:

And lo! God, my God!
Look! Look! I travel in Thy strength
I swing in the grasp of Thy Love, Thy great Love's
One Strength,
I run Thy swift ways, Thy straightest rails
Until my life becomes Thy life and sails or rides
like an express!

This imagery clearly reflects the confident attitude of the monk toward His

(Continued on Page 222)

Book Reviews

No Effusion

Cycle for Mother Cabrini. By John Logan. Grove Press. \$3.50.

JOHN LOGAN'S first volume, *Cycle for Mother Cabrini*, gives us ten remarkable poems. Logan has written many more and published many more poems, and he might better have indicated the variety of his work by including some of his shorter pieces. A general reservation concerning the poems under consideration is that they are a bit daunting as a group in a first volume. They are all so solid, so full-scale, that they do not give the reader an altogether adequate notion of the poet's capabilities. Also, for one who likes a longer line-length in a poem—an arbitrary bias that should not seriously affect anyone's regard for Logan's poems—the lines on these pages look a little too much the same, although admittedly the lines vary within the limits of the poet's choice.

"Cycle for Mother Cabrini," the long poem in three parts that gives the volume its title, is undoubtedly the major achievement here. Of all the poems, it is the most exciting and the most moving. First reading parts of it several years ago, as they appeared in somewhat different form, some readers may have prepared to condescend to an effusion about a "saint of the people." Instead, as they read they discovered a real poem, an authentic poem. It existed fully; what was said in it one could not imagine as being put in any other way:

I thank God Mother Cabrini's
Body is subject to laws
Of decay. To me it is
A disservice when flesh

Will not fall from bones
As God for His glory
Sometimes allows. I speak thus
For flesh is my failing:

That it shall fall is my
Salvation. That it shall not
Conquer is my blind hope.
That it shall rise again

Commanding, is my fear.
That it shall rise changed
Is my faith.

This is frankly poetry of statement. Its technique, based upon accentual beat and upon richness of allusion rather than upon any metrical regularity or restricted symbolic vocabulary, seems well-nigh impeccable. The technique, however, is subordinate to the poem's statement of theme; its way of stating something is not allowed to obstruct that statement. Poetry of statement, in order to be successful, must have so much to impart that it carries the reader along

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by virtue of sheer intellectual excitement. John Logan's poems are of a strongly intellectual cast, and they usually do have this quality of intellectual excitement necessary for a successful poetry of statement.

The tension in these poems, then, largely inheres in their themes and ideas and in the literary form through which these flower. Ordinarily Logan conceives of a poem as a debate, a monologue, a melodrama, a lament, an interrogation. The ideas thus are expressed with the concision of dramatic dialogue and the intensity of dramatic situation. The tempo of these poems is quickened and intensified by their accentual beat, the shortness of the lines and a most artful use of enjambment for all its worth. The total effect is not at all febrile, however, but is one of strength. Unusual here is the consistency with which this effect is maintained, a consistency that stems to a great extent from the meter common to them all and that gives the volume, despite its range of images and subjects, a singular unity.

Apparently John Logan has not undergone a revulsion against Christian symbolism and sentiment in art. His poems are lavish in saints and crucifixes and liturgical feasts; but, then, he gives the impression of having made up his mind to use anything at hand that will enable him to say what he has to say. His effort to attain precision does not end in a restriction of the range of images and symbols and a consequent constriction of language; he employs abstract words precisely, yet with sensitivity to their connotations. From "A Dialogue with La Mettrie," here is an example of the precise use of abstract language:

Let us then conclude
Boldly! Man is a machine.
And there is no other thing
Underneath. Except I believe
Ambiguity, with its hope
Or its ancient agony;

For to what do we look
To purify his remarks, or purge
His animal images?

Logan's themes are primarily religious rather than metaphysical, although a good deal of metaphysics does find its way into his lines and lends its structural strength to the poems. They are not religious, sacred poems in a devotional or visionary sense, except as all poems that "try to disprove materialism by coming into existence" have these qualities. We move from a visit to Mother Cabrini's shrine in Chicago to the death of Blessed Robert Southwell, from a Midwestern boyhood to "A Pathological Case in Pliny"; the subjects of the poems are varied. The treatment in most cases is of that realism introduced and made viable by Ezra Pound and his contemporaries. Thus in "A Short Life of the Hermit," a subject that a century ago would have elicited all the resources of Victorian rhetoric, we have a more direct colloquial tone:

The storms are on us, the sailing
Nearly over; you know
The restlessness of the post.
Thus I set down very briefly

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What I can
As one who was his friend
As one who poured the lucid
Water over the black or gold
And austere fingers of his hand.

Behind this manner and these earthly subjects lie the themes: love, the flesh, sin, death, "Ambiguity, with its hope / Or its ancient agony." The clear integrity of his purpose in making ten such poems will carry John Logan many poems beyond his first book.

NICHOLAS JOOST

Cowl and Camera

Silence in Heaven: A Book of Monastic Life. Text by Thomas Merton. 90 photographs. Studio Publications and Thomas Y. Crowell. \$7.95

THIS is not a book; it is an experience, if not identical with, at least analogous to that of a visitor to a monastery who has been unexpectedly let well in the door. In fact, this very setting was the *raison d'être* for the book, for, as its editor asks, "though publicity has pursued the monk throughout the 1500 and more years of his existence in Christendom, how much does the average tourist or sightseer who catches a glimpse of a monk at prayer, or is present at the solemn chanting of the Divine Office, really know about them?" True, he may be strikingly aware of an atmosphere charged with the supernatural, and the imprint of peace upon the monks' faces, yet he knows next to nothing of the real life which they live, a life whose minutest detail is packed with spiritual meaning. Even the most perceptive rarely penetrate beneath the externals of regular life to its real inner spirit. They come, they see, and properly touched by the otherworldly atmosphere of the cloister which moves them to reverence, awe, or possibly pity, they depart quite as puzzled as when they came.

It was this fact that inspired the monks of L'Abbaye de la Pierre-Qui-Vire, a Benedictine abbey well known in France for its artistic work, most of which has been utilized in the new church and in other places in the monastery, to present to the public a book of this nature, in which the monks might share God with their fellow men. For, "why should we not give Him to them in those moments when, in the figure of some monk, or in one of those humble objects used by monks, He is so unmistakably manifest?" And though they were well aware that the camera could never produce a perfect image of a *life* "that expressly desires to avoid anything like posing," yet they were convinced that in the hands of an artist skilled in the arts of composition and lighting it might delineate a truth beyond the merely superficial, and capture something of the perceptible element of the divine. At least, says the monk editor, representing his abbey, what was there to hinder them from trying? How glad we are that they did, for the result is astounding! Here is a handsome volume of ninety photographs, explicated by clustered texts from classics of spiritual literature, and further enhanced by a fourteen page introduction by the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, with the impact of a completeness of aesthetic and spiritual experience rarely come by between the covers of a book.

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The task must have been a difficult one, and the reader will appreciate the editor's remark that in many instances no sooner had the camera been turned on a monk who had unconsciously assumed an attitude that radiated the spiritual than he would imperceptibly stiffen, and his pose become that of a puppet, quite meaningless and absurd. Or an accident of light would rob the figure of another monk of all its authenticity, so that the picture would turn out to be "sugary and sentimental, or, worse still, nauseatingly 'holy.'" Naturally, commercial photographs could not be used, since stress on the "divine element" would necessarily preclude anything that would detract from it, such as even a small degree of posing certainly would. Too, one can appreciate the editor's embarrassment when after all the photographs were collected he discovered that more Benedictines were represented than monks of any other order, which would place him in an awkward position were he preparing a pictorial encyclopedia. But since it was the *vocation*, and the inner life *common to all*, which he wished to stress, fundamentally, habit and setting were of little importance.

So from a collection of nearly a thousand photographs, ninety were selected as sufficiently faithful to their purpose; he adds—we think somewhat amusedly—that they had "decided to include a few photographs of Cistercian monks and nuns as a reminder—if any such reminder were needed—that others, as well as the Benedictines, have chosen the cenobitic life, the call to which is addressed to all." And generously, he includes a few nuns. Yet it was quite impossible that even ninety photographs could show every aspect of observance—the reception of guests, for instance, which ranked so highly in the mind of St. Benedict, but which proved too elusive for the camera. However, since the book is not a documentary report but a placing of emphasis on the essential, on the center from which, no matter what his habit, the life of every monk radiates, this omission need present no serious obstacle.

Structurally, the book progresses from the known to the unknown, with Thomas Merton's introduction serving as an illuminating frame of reference for the pictorial content. In finely disciplined statement he articulates the theological basis of the monastic life with its mysteries of solitude, silence, and poverty, whose fundament is none other than the life of grace common to all Christians.

Merton sets the first scene of the monk's *apologia pro vita sua* in *Genesis* where, in the words of the world's first beginnings, man's spirit is symbolized as "void and empty," awaiting God's creative Spirit to move over chaos, and perfect light to pour in by the presence of the Word. This was done in Adam, who knew his own identity as a spirit come from God, living in Him, and destined to return to Him. But when he freely chose to experience evil, his soul again became a darkness in which he famished for light, until in the fullness of time God sent His Son to divide again the light from the darkness and recover what was His own. But it is most pertinent to note that after Christ's baptism in the Jordan, the Spirit led Him into the desert.

Herein is presented the symbolism of *any* vocation, especially of the monastic one, in which the monk vows all his life long to perfect *himself*, this "new creation," effected through the Incarnation. In silence, solitude, and renunciation, he waits on that Wisdom by which the mind is enlightened not with speculative science but with the obscure existential knowledge begotten of love—a wisdom that is no esoteric secret to be discovered by strange techniques, nor a diviner's rod, but one that, paradoxically, cries out in the streets, waiting for man to recognize

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it. But the monk as well as anyone else may pass it by, since the Word which God utters is full of silence—a silence that is a *docta ignorantia*, so to speak, a learned ignorance.

Thus snatched from the world by the silence of God, the monk finds a universe transformed from within by silence, and the discipline of a hidden wisdom; and he becomes hidden with her. Nor does the monk expect man to understand him in this hiddenness. For if the monastic life clearly cannot be defined by any one of its parts, neither can it be reduced to any one of its aspects. For its very essence is hidden in the existential darkness of life itself. The monk is one who "goes out to the frontiers of the Absolute, seeking the impossible, and the vision which no man can see without dying." And in deep silence wisdom sings her song within him—"the unique, irreplaceable song that each soul sings for himself with the unknown Spirit, as he sits on the doorstep of his own being, the place where his existence opens out into the abyss of God."

Merton shows eloquently and convincingly that the monastic life is wholly centered upon the tremendous existential silence of God, which though inexplicable is, nevertheless, the heart of all that is real, and lives by a soundless communication in mystery between man and God, "between man and his brother, and between man and all created things." And from this silence is drawn the monk's public prayer, the plain chant that by its beauty carries the soul into the infinitely more beautiful silence of God.

Merton no doubt speaks from experience—as master of novices at Gethsemani abbey, well he may—when he says that not all men can take this thing, "can listen to silence alone without going crazy, and not all can live on manna without pining away." Among monks, cenobitism mercifully appreciates these differences, and wisely so, "for few men are humble enough to be led by God alone." The vast majority remain in the *cenobium* or cloister, some because they need the community, others because the community needs them. However, for those called to the eremitical solitude, there are in the western Church two orders, the Carthusians and the Camaldolese, each now supported by firm juridical organization and a detailed rule of life. But, though cenobites are by far in the majority, there will always remain—and Merton stresses it—the purely solitary vocation. One almost senses a certain wistfulness beneath his statement, for it was not too long ago that we might have had grounds for believing that Merton himself was about to escape to such a solitude, and he has, we are told, a little hermitage built near the old horse-barn (actually, a window and door were put in a discarded tool-shed for him) to which he may retire on occasion to give way a little to the "hermit" in him. However that may be, he emphasizes that whatever the monk's vocation—eremite or cenobite—the call is always basically the same: to sink deep roots in the silence of God. As he listens to this silence, the monk feels "the secret presence of the Word expand within him like a marvelous hidden smile."

Might we venture to suggest that it is this "hidden smile" that the artist's camera has caught on the faces of the monks pictured in this book? For as regards any one of them one might say that

The accurate shutter fell on more than light and shadow
When the lens caught in its impersonal frame
This face of lustral quiet
Defenceless in its dazzling jail

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Of fire flowering under the spare bone;
It cut to essences. . . .

—to essences that are of the mystery of the silence of God. We find the photographs arranged under nine titles, each preceded by carefully selected texts, for the most part from Scripture and the Rule of St. Benedict, printed in large type, which not only suggest but actually convey a deep sense of silence, in which the reader may pause to heighten his own spiritual perception before proceeding to the same truths *in concreto* in the photographs.

The first section, "The Call of the Wilderness," comprises eight photographs portraying the cenobitic (even eremitic, in the three striking plates of the hermitage "in the hollow of the rock") locale, whose "true way thrusts deep into the woods," where the monastery of Chartreuse is glimpsed against the splendid massif of a mountain ridge. Plate 8, the portrait of an elderly monk, is unforgettable in its spiritual quality; one is tempted to reflect that were this the only plate in the entire book the story would still be well told.

Of Section II, "The Work of the Monks," the editor remarks that its twenty-seven plates were possibly the easiest to assemble, but of necessity bound to be least complete, since the monks' manual and intellectual activities are so many and diverse, "not one of which is *a priori* forbidden by the Rule." Here are monks in the fields, plowing and planting; in the monastic studio, "thinking with one's hands," as they sketch and design that sacred art for which the abbey of La Pierre-qui-Vire is distinguished; and at the draughtsman's frame, where "even a mathematical problem can be made to radiate the divine." Here also are a stonemason at his wall and a young monk teaching, as two rapt youngsters look up at him from their worn wooden benches; and perhaps to many—as to this reviewer—it will be a surprise to learn that "the ideal monastery is equipped with an up-to-date laboratory where all the latest data is available and where research work can be methodically carried out with the greatest precision," as a monk is seen conducting a scientific investigation of the various types of potato. Plate 22, "Shoemaking," is a portrait one would not wish to miss, one of the most excellent of the book, where above the caption of the Gospel text, "There has stood one in the midst of you, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose" (John 1:26-27), an aged monk bends reverently over a worn sandal. Nor are the nuns forgotten. There are four of them presented in this section, to show that they work too; above a delightful sally of St. Teresa of Avila's, "I wish our house had a bigger garden so that Sister Beatrice might have a little more work to do" (Letter 331), we find a nun digging in the garden, another busy at a loom, a third—apparently a Carmelite—hovering above pots and pans, and a fourth at a rather modern looking contrivance, engaged, as the caption indicates, in the intricate technique of book-binding in plastic.

Sections III and IV, "Lectio Divina," and "The Soul of the Monastic Life," follow logically on this, and in Plates 37 to 48 we find, in the concrete, the beautiful joining of the members of the Benedictine formula, "*Ora et labora.*" Here are monks in quiet reflection in some silent spot intended to deepen one's own inward silence, or reading in the cloister, "that alley winding round and round and open only to heaven." Here too are monks in libraries, which, though not expressly envisaged by the Benedictine Rule, have nevertheless since the Middle Ages come to distinguish monasteries. There are also in this section a

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number of superb shots centering around the church sacristy, and the private and conventual Masses, around which the monastic day turns.

These are followed in Sections V and VI, "The Steps that Lead up to Profession" and "The Communal Life," by photographs in narration of the various steps taken by the postulant to the monastery, from the ritual of the *mandatum* to the taking of vows. Plate 54 represents the lovely profession ritual of Carmel, wherein the monk makes his vow of obedience while holding his clasped hands enfolded in those of his superior. Then follow magnificent photographs of the various places in the monastery where the monk lives his life hidden in God: the chapter room, refectory, cell, and finally the cemetery, where he will lie beneath a stark wooden cross.

Parts VII and VIII, "Opus Dei" and "The Pontifical Office," show the monks at prayer in choir, where "the white cowls sing in the night." Both Cistercian and Benedictine choirs are represented, the former in their stalls chanting from large in-folios, the latter holding small modern individual office books. Plates 76 and 77 continue this theme on its most solemn and liturgical level; in the various groups of young monks bearing the ritual accoutrements of the abbatial services are unforgettable faces that shine with serenity and light. One might legitimately speculate as to whether or not a person without faith in God, after a glance at these rapt faces—Plates 77 and 81 in particular—whose inner radiance the photographic lens has almost miraculously captured, would not have sufficient evidence to convince him that man is created to no mere earthly image, but to that of the divine.

The ninth section, "Symbols," presents magnificent plates of monks in procession; as they walk on, stone by stone their stairway to the stars takes on ineffable light and shape beneath a sky full of mystery. Water dances over the rocks, and the wilderness blossoms for those who thus spend themselves in the life-long exercise of love—"in solemnitate amoris habitare." The final plate symbolizes *Silence in Heaven*, title of the book, as a cloud edged with light. Beneath is the text of William of St. Thierry, from which the title was taken and which peaks of the happy soul drawn by grace to God by God:

This is the end,
This is the consummation,
perfection, peace, the joy of God,
the joy in the Holy Ghost:
this is SILENCE IN HEAVEN.

The editors of this book were indeed happy in the gathering and final selection of photographs from various sources, both individual and monastic. It is interesting to note that the greater number—some fifty-six—were furnished by Mlle Beraud-Villars; others came from such monasteries as La Trappe de Sept Fons and La Trappe de Thymadeuc, and from Phelipeaux, Anquetil, Belzeaux, the Carmel du Reposoir, Hervé, and Marmounier. Two further acknowledgements refer to individuals: J. Fortier and P. Kill.

This superb book speaks for itself. One would like to see it, literally, everywhere. At any rate, it ought to be on the shelves of every library, in both religion and art departments. It ought, too, to find a place on the desks of the men and women of our busy world whose minds must of necessity concentrate on the immediate duties of the day. Let them reach out from time to time to touch its

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pages, opening it at random and looking upon the meaning of vocation, *any* vocation, for in essence the Christian vocation is the same—Christ expanding within us, and redeeming this “new creation” which is ourselves. The simplicity and austerity of the photographs, together with the beauty and fitness of the texts, should do much to dispel the only too frequent romantic aura surrounding and attaching to the life of a monk in the cloister. For their perceptivity and insight in sensing the need for such a book as this, and for so admirably executing it, the monks of L'Abbaye de la Pierre-Qui-Vire are to be most warmly congratulated. When will someone succeed in doing this for nuns? Not that we do not have abundant material in circulation, but it is for the most part conspicuous for its commercial and propaganda purpose. Let us also see depicted the *raison d'être* of our so varied life.

SISTER M. THERESE, S.D.S.

A Glory of Stone

Notre-Dame of Paris. By Allan Temko. Viking. \$6.75.

THERE are only a few experiences in art and life which, in fascination and inspiration, can surpass the beauty and the splendor expressed in the Gothic cathedrals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In a time when the Christian faith was in its most penetrating and mystical fervor, these churches were raised heavenward in a glory of stone and a brilliance of engineering, exalting God and expressing powerful faith. In Canterbury and Salisbury, in Chartres and Rheims, in Cologne and Strasbourg, in Venice and Florence, they rose to house the Church Invisible and to become the centers of medieval man's life. They were not only places of worship, but also of pageantry and secular power, of art and learning and communal spirit. The idea and biography of a Gothic cathedral therefore afford the clearest picture of the idea and culture of the Middle Ages, their most accurate biography.

Recognizing this characteristic Allan Temko has given us, beyond the plain history of a cathedral, a fascinating story of the full flowering of medieval life, medieval art and the medieval spirit. And he has done it without imitating the intellectual sententiousness of Henry Adams or the romantic symbolism of Huysmans.

Written in a style that is unpretentious, yet eloquent and imaginative, Temko's book is an inspiring reconstruction not only of architectural form, but also of an age of the past and a way of life so different from ours. The story of its building and of the men and women who built it is one of the great sagas of group achievement and of the eternal human spirit. In a description of life and activity, of color and pageantry, of religious fervor and secular ambition, the book ranges through political and social history, architecture, sculpture, engineering, biography, religion and iconography. It gives us an inspired insight into one of the golden ages.

Like any skilled biographer, Allan Temko first of all recreates for us the times that produced his subject, the historic figures who contributed to its growth, and the Catholicism of the Middle Ages which inspired it. Woven through it is the richness of a whole period of art-feeling expressed in architecture, in sculpture and design. In relating to us the origins of the cathedral

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itself, and its Roman and Merovingian forebears, he also furnishes an interesting early history of Paris with all its secular and ecclesiastic associations and background. He takes us to many of the other great cathedrals of France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and ties together their growth and development with those of Notre Dame. Then he shows us the great choir rising, while Louis VII fought off the Plantagenets and the Hohenstaufen. The nave was completed and the western facade begun while Philip Augustus won Normandy and consolidated the house of Capet. And the final splendor of architectural achievement, stone by stone, rib by rib, window by window, is brought back to life in the brilliant chapters dealing with the colorful rule of Blanche of Castile and her sainted son Louis. Against the background of the dynamic growth of French nationalism and the religious zeal of the Crusades, great personalities from every phase of life and history appear and go. There are the architects who dreamed of the cathedral and built it during two centuries: Jehan de Chelles, Pierre de Montreuil, Jehan Ravi and others unknown. Princes of the Church make their entrance and exit: Maurice de Sully, a bishop strong and absolute in his reign; Guillaume d'Auvergne, Renand de Corbeil and, in 1245, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas lecture in Paris in the shadow of the growing cathedral. And the long procession of French rulers beginning with Louis VII, who started the church, to Louis the Lion, Philip Augustus, Saint Louis, and, associated with them, the imposing figure of Queen Blanche of Castile.

All of this is written with a sweep of imagination that makes the book much more than a guide. Based on an unusual knowledge of medieval architecture, art and culture, a truly sympathetic penetration and fruitful intuition, the book indeed becomes a vivid biography of an epoch.

Always present is the truest symbol of the passion of Notre Dame, of the spirit of the Middle Ages: the Virgin. "And among the bells, on the high open terrace between the towers, where the sky is alive with birds, and sunlight revels on golden stone, and the gargoyles stretch their long necks outward, could be heard the laughter of the Virgin, singing to her city and her nation, to all the world, that mankind is again in a Romanesque, approaching a Gothic phase."

North Dakota Agricultural College

LEO HERTEL

Accent "Indefinite"

The Literary Symbol. By William York Tindall. Columbia University Press. \$4.50.

TINDALL'S argument runs through seven densely concrete and allusive chapters dealing with 1) theory and 2) history of symbols, 3) symbols in novels, 4) images as symbols, 5) actions as symbols, 6) structures as symbols, and 7) overall "form" or the whole literary work itself as symbol. This outline of the book is successfully concealed to casual inspection by the use of cute chapter titles—"Roses and Calipers," "The Stuffed Owl," "The Trotting Mouse," "The Fur-Lined Cup." The book may be conveniently discussed under three main

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heads: its doctrine (or theory about symbols), its filler (that is, its materials or illustrations), and its style.

The doctrinal effort, after certain preliminary semantic maneuvers, and after certain courtesies in the direction of Cassirer and Suzanne Langer, settles for a strong accent upon the "indefinite." After all legitimate definitions and clarifications have been allowed for, the identifying trait of the literary symbol is found to be just that, its indefiniteness. The quality of being indefinite is its main glory, its inviolability, its inevitable rebuff to the over-eager analytical critic. Thus Tindall chooses for his theoretical focus a feature of the symbol which is conspicuous and inescapable, but which after all is a limitation and embarrassment of theory (as well as of analytical criticism) rather than a part of the expressible content of theory or an area for theoretical exploitation. The result could scarcely be a great enrichment of the theoretical part of the essay. Sadly stunted accounts of medieval and Renaissance symbolism are among the more obvious deficiencies. With Dante, for instance, the "indefinite" is merely "secondary" but "after the decay of his convention" is "almost the only meaning that persists." And with Donne, "possibilities of disharmony" were "exploited" only in "more doubtful moments"—the "seeming incompatibility of mechanical drawing and love . . . was nothing."

The result for Tindall's own practical criticism is a method combined of "analysis" and "impression," "a cooperation of analysis and impression," a "decent compromise." A considerable range of modern literary works, poems of all sorts (characteristically by Eliot, Yeats, Crane, Dylan Thomas, Auden, Stevens, Hopkins, Baudelaire, Valéry, and Mallarmé) and novels (by Flaubert, Mann, Proust, Kafka, Melville, Conrad, Joyce, Lawrence, Woolf, Forster, Faulkner—Henry Green and John Hersey) receive in quick, economical order the benefit of Tindall's flickering, fastidious, tentatively caressing commentary. It is often difficult enough to see just where real "analysis" leaves off and the cooperative power of "impression" takes over. I believe that Tindall himself would not quite know where the transfer occurs, and might not much care. There are at least a few extremely wild shots: for instance, the extravagant attempt to appreciate the quite commonplace and quite tedious "Song of Harvard" by T. S. Eliot as an undergraduate, or the preposterous announcement that when Mallarmé translates Poe's well-known sonorous and lugubrious refrain into "Jamais plus!" ["Le Corbeau dit: 'Jamais plus!'"], "a terrible beauty is born." Discoveries like this do not promote confidence in the reading.

Still there are numerous snatches, expository conceits, incidents, moments in the book which I admire and for which I am grateful. Among longer passages, let me mention the condensed story of the Hermetic tradition and the whole last chapter, or nearly the whole of it, dealing with the symbolic value of "form in the work itself." Among shorter passages: the firm theoretical tidying up here and there, as in putting aside Joseph Frank's "spatial" theory of modern literature or in asserting the literary irrelevance of both the Freudian and the Malinowskian analysis of symbols, or exegetic moments such as the clear recognition of something distasteful to naturalists, the fact that the conclusion of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* is not in the heroic vein.

But the style! Surely the style of this book is the most remarkable thing offered to a reader's notice. The main features are condensation, rapidity, lacunism, allusiveness; and along with these (second only by a slight margin in prom-

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inence) appear ingenuity, witticism, verbal acrobatics, duplicity, puns, and pranks. The effort of this style is for sophistication, urbanity, the discursive display of all those rich and sleek qualities so much admired in the imaginative works of which the discourse treats. The book likes to think of itself as a kind of tabloid *Finnegans Wake* of modern criticism. And I would not say that the stylistic effort altogether fails. There are passages, even many passages, as I have indicated, which one may well admire. But again and again, and for fairly long stretches, this style is unmistakably vulgar. And not vulgar only in the sense of dwelling with coy euphemistic delight on erotic or bathroom themes, but in the broadest sense of being trivial, pretentious, and mistakenly witty—in playing for hollow laughs. There is much sheer verbalism: trapeze action, for instance, in passing from topic to topic ("We need not linger by the sea," "Goldsmith brings 'Sailing to Byzantium' to mind,"—Oliver Goldsmith, be it understood), or places where Tindall would sound like Bacon or Johnson ("The imagist school, founded by T. E. Hulme, promoted by Ezra Pound, and adorned by T. S. Eliot . . .") or like Alexander Pope (" . . . a poetic suitable now for modern poets to use and critics to adore,") or where he would deliver a punishing dig with just the fitting nicety ("Whereas Dante ascends from adorable woman to the heaven she embodies, the preliminary ascension of Dante's adorer [T. S. Eliot again] seems powered by stamping woman back into Bleistein's slime . . ."). Eliot, by the way, is a sure provocation for bursts of Tindall's wit. Eliot, "always mixing memory with desire and tradition with individual talent," " . . . sat waiting for the gifts of faith, hope, and charity to descend."

To this tweaking and teasing, add the complementary trait of the casually familiar testimony, the memoirs of a professor who has been cozy with the great, a gifted hobnobber. "As Auden explained at his blackboard at Swarthmore . . ." " . . . Stevens has neither seen it nor heard of it, or so he told me one day in my parlor." "As Thomas put it one day in a bar on West 23rd Street . . ." "When in a bar one afternoon I told Thomas of these impressions, he was much affected and cried a little . . ." This reviewer will perhaps be forgiven for entertaining here a vivid image of the intimate spellbinder in undergraduate classrooms, the man who lectures with one leg over the back of his chair or sitting with crossed legs on top of his desk.

Yale University

W. K. WIMSATT, JR.

Max Jacob's Friends

Les Cahiers Max Jacob. Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4. Paris: Les Amis de Max Jacob.

MAX JACOB was still resting in a temporary grave five years after his death although one of his last wishes had been that he should be buried in the cemetery of the Basilica of Saint-Benoît. Aware of this last wish, a group of his friends banded together to raise the funds necessary to fulfill this wish, and his remains were transferred to the place of his choice on March 5, 1949. After his interment and the blessing of the grave, a group of friends convened formally and voted their legal incorporation as the Association des Amis de Max Jacob.

Among the projects that they approved as befitting their group were the improvement of Max Jacob's tomb, the celebration of a certain number of masses

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each year for the repose of his soul, an annual pilgrimage to the cemetery about March 5, the creation of a prize for poetry to be known as the Prix Max Jacob, the publication of his unedited works, the collecting of his paintings and manuscripts with a view to founding a Musée Max Jacob, and the annual publication of a *Cahier*.

The first *Cahier* was published on schedule: March 5, 1951. It contained a preface by André Salmon and the text of a children's story that the poet-painter had written at the request of an editor. This fantasy had been published in 1904 by Picard and Kahn in the "Bibliothèque d'éducation récréative" series with illustrations by L. Saint. But since no one could possibly have foreseen the value of this prize, won by children of school age, it soon became impossible to find a copy. Entitled *Histoire du roi Kaboul Ier et du marmiton Gauvain*, it has a colorful style and a theme typical of its genre: the son of a blacksmith becomes a scullion in the royal kitchens; by dint of wit and valor, he manages to win the hand of the princess. The catalogues of desserts, of clothes, of the wonders of the castle and the horrors of the dungeon are calculated to make young eyes sparkle with delight or bulge in awe. Those who have suggested that Max Jacob could not or would not write in the traditional manner will find their answer here. The first *Cahier* also contained a bibliography of the French editions of his works (1904-1949).

The second *Cahier* came out according to plan, written with an introduction by Jean Cocteau, a charter member of the group. The idea of a bibliography was continued; this time it included works to which Max Jacob had contributed in one way or another as well as posthumous editions, studies of him and his work, and journals devoting issues to him. This second number, *Lettres imaginaires* (1952), offered not a single work but seven short compositions, all in epistolary form. They are not related by subject matter, the imaginary writer and addressee having no importance beyond the missive that they send or receive in, from, or for themselves. The compositions deal with a variety of subjects, but they have this one thing in common: they poke fun at those who busy themselves with other people's affairs now that their own lives have ground to a halt. The first letter, for example, deals with an old courtesan, formerly mistress of Napoleon III. Her letter is to a younger woman to whom she gives some rather worldly advice on how to make the most of men, their families, and their money. There are also sly smiles towards Russian refugees, the movies, the world of fashion, millionaires, doting mothers, cynical fathers, love-sick girls, callous young men, and other features that Max Jacob could not fail to notice in the French capitol during the twenties. Thus, this second publication contrasts sharply with the first in form, style, tone, and subject. Max Jacob could do these things well too.

Cahier 3 (1953), presented by Henri Sauguet, turned to still another genre, the theater, and was prefaced by a bibliography of Max Jacob's creations in this literary type between 1914 (*Le Siège de Jérusalem*) and 1951 (*La Sainte Hermandade*). Sauguet recounts in his liminary notice how Max Jacob and he used to collaborate on *Un Amour du Titien*, an operetta, when Max Jacob used to come to Sauguet's furnished room after hearing Mass and receiving the Eucharist at Sacré-Cœur. Max Jacob would sing and recite the naissant text with his usual glee and self-generating joy. This went on for several weeks, according to Sauguet, who, by 1953, had composed only a bit of the music for the work; he regrets that Chabrier did not have a text like *Un Amour du Titien*, that Offen-

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bach could not have been on hand to add the final flourish to this extravaganza of costuming, ballets, characters, and script. The five acts and four tableaux of *Un Amour du Titien* (1928) constituted the first section of the third *Cahier*; *La Police Napolitaine*, a musical comedy, was included as a companion piece. Announcements of the activities of Les Amis de Max Jacob during 1952 were also made: the winners of the Prix established by the group, expositions of Max Jacob's art and literary works, recent and imminent publications adding to his fame.

The fourth *Cahier* apparently ran into financial trouble in spite of Mrs. Frank Jay Gould's generosity: the 1954 and 1955 issues were brought together into one somewhat thin volume that was not off the presses until March 15, 1956. A short but sympathetic essay by François Mauriac introduces the four stories forming the body of the issue. The first of the *Romanesques* is a sort of candlelight-spotlight waltz about an Italianish cantatrice, La Ramboni, and her unknown musician, Gaston, who make the most of the Milan-Vienna circuit. They feel this is the best way to hide their love and to stage their glory, without tears but always with a pianoforte. The date is 182 . . . , the manner is Metternich, the dinners are brilliant. Gaston finally manages to compose some operas that are not too boring. And after all this, the couple retire to live happily ever after among their celebrated collection of snuffboxes. The second story, *Biographie du Grand Homme*, continues the laceration of those who deck themselves with indulgences of their own imagining, but the barbs are directed in the first instance at the scholarly compilers of the nineteenth century. The central character is Charles Durand, author extraordinary, who manages to get out of school, with enough time to spare, to compile his *Compilation of Compilations*. Needless to add, Durand's death is a day of mourning for his family and for all France. Was he not the champion of the concept that nothing should be exaggerated? And he was living proof that nothing succeeds like success.

The *Cahiers* provide delightful reading; they add to an understanding of Max Jacob by allowing us to read him again. As M. R. Monier remarked recently in *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, they continue to reveal to us the man who loved to disguise himself so much.

SPIRE PITOU

The Heart as Inkstand

Testament d'Apollinaire. By René Guy Cadou. Paris: Debesse.

Maison d'été. By René Guy Cadou. Paris: Debesse.

Usage interne. By René Guy Cadou. Paris: Les amis de Rochefort.

THESE three slender volumes, different though they are in subject and objective, nevertheless all show they could have been written only by a poet. *La Maison d'été* in particular, a thoroughly realized short novel on the ancient theme of profane versus sacred love, is full of deep feeling expressed in vivid imagery drawn from firsthand knowledge of nature and human nature. Country scenes—woodland, farm and vineyards—Paris streets, and humble city rooms are more than sketched; they are felt, as the young hero moves through them in search of knowledge and love. The human types portrayed are as vivid as their environment; a master farmer, powerful and rough but full of simple wisdom, warns his

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young helper against the Zolaesque siren who spreads her nets promiscuously for almost every male in her neighborhood. His warning is, of course, vain, but the charm is short-lived. The young man leaves the farm for Paris where he eventually finds true love.

Whether or not this story is actually autobiographical, it sounds like self-revelation. Max Jacob once said to Cadou in a discussion of poetry: "Find your heart and turn it into an inkstand." This is exactly what Cadou has done here and in his poetry. An "experiencing nature" is the matrix out of which all his writing grows. Born in 1920 in the western part of France, he never wished to live in Paris, as so many of his contemporaries did. He visited it occasionally, only to return to his homeland disgusted with the experimenters and Left Bank surrealists, whom he thought for the most part to be *poseurs*, vulgar and insincere. His comments on Cocteau in particular show him as far from sympathetic to that gifted but opium-distorted artist.

However, for one Parisian artist, Apollinaire, he has only praise based on understanding. His "témoinage," *Testament d'Apollinaire*, is a piece of criticism that every student of modern French literature should know. Based on long and thorough study not only of Apollinaire's works but of those of his friends and enemies since about 1910, this study develops an illuminating definition of Futurism and allied aesthetic movements, differentiated from the experiments of writers and painters less original than Apollinaire.

Cadou shared with this predecessor not only a subtle and tenacious power of observation and definition, but a high degree of artistic self-consciousness. His little collection of "Aphorisms," *Usage interne*, is proof of his life-long investigation of poetic impulse, expressiveness and usefulness. In fact, as his friend Michel Manoll says in an introductory essay, it is a poet's journal, stripped to essentials and blazing with that intense fire of genius which precipitated Cadou's untimely death. Such brief phrases as: "The poet's emotion does not come from what he sees, but from what he endures," tell a great deal about the depth of feeling in this young man. Again, "one must be alone to be great. But one must be great to be alone," and, "I rather like this criticism of poetry: poetry is as useless as rain." And how much self-revelation is in: "I am capable of hating myself for six months for the satisfaction of adoring myself for five minutes."

Cadou tirelessly looked into his own heart and mind to discover his nature and its operative processes. Toward this exploration the events of a comparatively quiet life contributed. The obsession with death which is a leading theme in his poetry probably began to haunt him after the death of his beautiful and adored mother when he was twelve years old. It persisted, though less intensely, even after his happy marriage to the Hélène to whom many rapturous verses are dedicated. His many friends and the boys he taught in the local school for several years were devoted to him, for like country dwellers from time immemorial he shared his neighbors' tasks until his strength failed. He died in 1951, not yet thirty-one years old.

Young though he was at his death, he had had time to turn many of his observations and experiences into music and picture. The pictures are delicate and rather low-toned in their realism; the music is simple, not tortured with extravagant, loud effects or far-fetched symbolism. There is not a great deal of end rhyme in it, but a rather subtle variety of assonance. "Aller simple," the title of one of the short poems might serve as a motto for the many others which are

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full of humble life, contrasts of light and dark, village noises and quiet, with none of these elements ever exaggerated or over-elaborated.

Michel Manoll has published a number of the poems, some for the first time, in his study of Cadou. The illustrations in this small volume show the poet at various ages, his family, his handsome wife, a number of his friends, and his little house, Louisfert, all testifying to the simplicity and honesty of Cadou's life. These traits he has distilled into some of the most refreshing poetry of our time.

Vassar College

WINIFRED SMITH

Revolutions and Conservatives

A Study of George Orwell. By Christopher Hollis. Regnery. \$3.95.

HOLLIS first met Orwell when they were Collegers together at Eton. Orwell even then was an eccentric and was lucky to be at Eton, for Eton has an aristocratic tradition and was therefore more tolerant of the unconventional than other schools. Tolerance is the by-product of security, social and financial, and even today there is far more tolerance of eccentricity in Mayfair than on Main Street. After leaving Eton, Orwell joined the Imperial police and when Hollis dined with him in Rangoon in 1925 he could detect in him "no trace of liberal opinion." Orwell threw up his police appointment and tried to live by his pen; the first disastrous consequences of this action are described in his book *Down and Out in Paris and London*.

The turning point in his life was the Spanish Civil war. Orwell's outstanding characteristics were courage and integrity. He fought as a volunteer in the ranks of the P.O.U.M., a Trotskyite militia, discovering the true nature of Communism when the Communists seized control in Barcelona and started liquidating left wing deviationists, among them the grandson of Bob Smillie who threw up his career at Glasgow to fight for what he believed to be democracy. This sickened Orwell. At a time when most Americans and most Englishmen thought of the civil war as a struggle between Fascism and Democracy, Orwell in his book *Homage to Catalonia* described as "plain eyewash" all the talk about its being a war for democracy.

During the Second World War, Orwell and I lunched together regularly. One day when he was describing the liquidation by the Communists in Barcelona of other leftists he remarked, "The Communists had their revolution so they became conservative." "If the only result," I answered, "of a revolution in which millions are killed is to install a new type of conservative, why not leave the old conservatives in power?" Orwell winced. I knew that I had touched a sensitive nerve, that he had in fact been asking himself the same question. "You Catholics are such pessimists," he remarked, "you don't believe in the possibility of a radical change in human nature." "What we do not believe in," I said, "is the myth of invincible progress. Also we know that power corrupts."

Orwell would probably have agreed with Penn that men must be governed by God or they will be governed by tyrants. He did not believe in God, and his intellectual integrity forbade him to evade the alternative, tyranny. No Catholic, believing in the redeeming power of grace, could possibly subscribe to the

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pessimism which finds expression in that terrible study of England under a totalitarian tyranny, 1984.

Orwell was too honest not to realize the social consequences of abandoning the belief in immortality. "The real problem," he wrote, "is to restore the religious attitude while accepting death as final," a problem which is insoluble.

I am glad to see that Hollis agrees with me in regarding Orwell's essay on Kipling as one of the most revealing of all his writings. Orwell remained to the end a Socialist. He disliked many things about Kipling—his sadism, his class consciousness—but though he disapproved of Kipling he respected him, whereas he neither approved nor respected the flabbier type of left-wing intellectual. He particularly disliked the fashionable left-wing attitude to the fighting man, an attitude which is the product of sexual envy, for women, in their atavistic fashion, still rate courage higher than cleverness. He quotes with approval Kipling's devastating comment on the left-wing pacifists "making mock of uniforms that guard them while they sleep." Kipling as Orwell remarks did "possess one thing which 'enlightened' people seldom or never possess, a sense of responsibility. The middle-class left hate him for this as much as for his cruelty and vulgarity."

Hollis has written a book worthy of his theme, one of the best studies in recent times of a great literary personality.

SIR ARNOLD LUNN

Instead of Pets

All the Books of My Life. By Sheila Kaye-Smith. Harper. \$3.00.

BY THE time this book appears in print," wrote the late Sheila Kaye-Smith in the introduction to this last of her works, "I shall be in my seventieth year. . . ." The pathos of the unfulfilled prediction (she died in January 1956, at the age of sixty-eight) is tempered somewhat by the reflection that it would be difficult to think of many men or women of our time who could look back from the evening to the dawn with such a sense of lifelong fulfillment as marked her contemplation of the past. Twenty years ago, in her spiritual autobiography *Three Ways Home*, she dwelt with amusement on the fact that all the fondest ambitions of her childhood—to live in the country, to be a celebrated novelist of rural life, and "to be extremely High Church"—had, with certain modifications, come true. And in old age she could write, "As a child I was less happy than as a young woman and as a young woman less happy than when middle age, which in my youth had meant an end, revealed itself instead as a beginning."

Having used up the chief events of her life from 1887 to 1937 as grist for reminiscence in *Three Ways Home*, she decided in her later years that the impulse to write about the past should find release in a channel other than actual autobiography. Her choice, after rejecting (fortunately, one thinks) both pets and gastronomy as central themes, was to write about her experience with books. "In the course of a reasonably long life," she mused, "I must have read many hundreds of books, some of which I have forgotten, but most of which I remember, and all of which, remembered or forgotten, must have left some mental deposit, so that in a sense I am mentally as much the books I have read as I am chemically the food I have eaten."

The charm and interest of the resulting biblio-biography makes one think

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that it would be an excellent thing if every literate person were to put together a "judicious and faithful narrative" of the reading of a lifetime. A large group of such documents from each generation would be much more than an endless store of bedtime snacks for the bookman; they would provide substantial fare for the social historian.

All the Books of My Life is made up of a dozen essays, about half of which follow a roughly chronological pattern. Her recollections of early reading, at home and at school, are much like those of other persons who grew up in late Victorian or Edwardian times. But even in childhood her response to some of the books she read forecast that revulsion from unballasted romance that was to be a prominent aspect of her mature outlook. As a child, she was bored by Andrew Lang's collection of fairy tales. A little later, her sister Mona, enthralled by *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, tried to draw her to that best-seller by quoting the scene in which Sir Percy Blakeney kneels down and kisses the pavement at every spot where Lady Blakeney's little feet have trod. But Sheila was unmoved: "All I thought was what an ass he must have looked while he was doing it, and I wondered if he had proceeded on all fours or whether he had stood up after each kiss and then knelt down again."

She grew up plagued by a swarm of taboos, most of them hatched, she thinks, in the girls' academy she attended in Hastings (it's pleasant to find Victorian family life absolved of blame, for once). As the students read Shakespeare aloud in class, from expurgated but apparently insufficiently expurgated texts, the mistress would every now and then cry out, "Stop! Don't read what follows! Start again at the bottom of the page." The effect must have been somewhat like that of the memorable scene involving King Lear and the Get-Ready Man witnessed by Mr. Thurber. Sheila's discovery of the eighteenth-century novelists, with their lusty response to life, helped rout adolescent vapors. "My sense of humour was hidden in a cellar of private laughter," she explains, "but at least and at last it was in the house."

Despite her gratitude to Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, she did not make permanent companions of them. Her enduring favorites were to be Borrow, Jane Austen, and Blake; and for her later years, one should probably add the two writers with whose works she "lavishly" provided herself at the beginning of the Second World War: Baron von Hügel and P. G. Wodehouse. A fascinating group, these five: it is most entertaining to imagine her companions as companions for each other.

She was not—and did not pretend to be—an analytic critic; yet about her prime favorites she had some excellent things to say. There is her description of the strange, transforming gleam in Borrow, "as if Salvador Dali had painted Frith's 'Derby Day.'" (Odd that she seems never to have caught that transforming gleam in Dickens.) There is her affectionate tribute to von Hügel: "He is always 'creaturely'—a word he loved—great but creaturely." She agrees with Belloc that Wodehouse at his best is a stylist of classic stature; that his real admirers value most, not his ingenuity in farce, but his sheer command of language.

On Jane Austen she had, of course, been saying good things for years—notably in the two sets of appreciative essays she did with her friend G. B. Stern. Of Sheila Kaye-Smith as a Janeite one might fairly paraphrase what Leigh Hunt said about Lamb and Shakespeare: she would have been worthy of hearing Jane

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Austen read one of her scenes to her, hot from the brain. Perhaps with Jane Austen one should say *cool* from the brain.

She reminisces delightfully about some of her contemporaries: Thomas Hardy (whose work, she says, was never an influence on her own regional fiction); Robert Nichols, for whom she entertained a girlish crush and who met her again after twenty years with the incomparable greeting, "Hullo, Sheila! So we meet again. *I've still got all your letters*"; W. L. George, who showed her how to plan her novels; D. H. Lawrence, "uncouthly knotted up in his own past."

Her best reminiscent writing is in a chapter called "Sad Pageant of Forgotten Writers," an essay flavored with some of the tender mockery of Beerbohm's "Books Within Books" and "Enoch Soames." She recalls the kindness of Coulson Kernahan, once renowned for his pious allegories: "I would not like to say anything that might seem ungrateful, but it was very much the kindness of God to the ant." His wife, Jeanie Gwynne Kernahan, kept the household going by scribbling pot-boilers at night: "Memory must play me false when it shows her presenting me with a copy of her thousandth novel. It must have been her hundredth." Best of all is an exquisite sketch of Matilda Betham-Edwards, author of *The White House by the Sea*. Matilda "was once persuaded to leave home and stay with a family who lived near Tunbridge Wells. They thought so highly of this achievement that they had an account of it printed and circulated among her friends."

I suppose a book like this will inevitably fail to tell us many things we should like to know. Her fairly full account of her early reading contains no discussion of Stevenson. Can it be true that what appear to be unmistakable stylistic echoes of Stevenson throughout *The Tramping Methodist* and *Starbrace* are really, like the fainting heroes of her early novels, only echoes of Edna Lyall? Again, she tells how she was introduced—tardily—to the work of Francis Thompson; but there is nowhere any mention of Hopkins. Did she ever speak elsewhere on the subject of Hopkins? One would think that the author of that beautiful climactic scene of *Green Apple Harvest* (surely the most impressive passage in her fiction) would have been captivated by "Hurrahing in Harvest" and "The Starlight Night."

Although names of books and writers are thickly clustered in the pages of *All the Books of My Life*, the book contains no index. A reader who wishes to know whether or not Sheila Kaye-Smith had anything to say about Meredith or James or Freud or Proust will simply have to settle down for extensive browsing. And a very good thing, too.

JOSEPH B. CONNORS

Quo Vadis?

Les Mains Libres I. Edited by Stanislas Fumet and André Frossard. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.

THIS inaugural volume of a Catholic collection is dedicated to the principle that "though the heart be bound in faith, the hands remain free to receive, to create, to exchange, and to do."

Originally published in 1947, Evelyn Waugh's miniature novel *Scott-King's Modern Europe*, translated into smoothly flowing French by Maurice Beerblock,

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appears as the volume's opening selection. Evidently put forth as the *pièce de résistance*, it is a work that neither the editors nor the author can take much pride in. Some may recall that this story has to do with the officially unblest trip of Scott-King, classical master of an English public school, to Neutralia, a fictive totalitarian state of Southern Europe.

Such a state, with its manifold evils, would seem to offer considerable scope for the talents of this specialist in satire. Waugh does satirize, along with much else, the ridiculous emphasis the totalitarian state places on pomp and ceremonial, its exasperating self-righteousness, and the grim-visaged jockeying for power of its functionaries. But it remains that this challenging subject deserved better of his skillful hand. Surely he would be hard put to justify his dwelling on Bromo-Seltzer and hangovers, on cotton wool patches and razor-cut faces, on cigar-smoking women, and the like, in practically the same breath with police round-ups and executions. Inapposite and gratuitous as the humor too often is, it is with its superabundance that one must quarrel most, for the grinning clown is constantly on stage, the grinning skeleton almost never. And the narrative wears a jerry-built aspect, with many characters introduced and episodes incorporated without assignable cause. On the plus side: some of the humor is as good as Waugh's best, which is good indeed; his supple, relaxedly articulate style often impresses, and he has in Scott-King created one of his more memorable characters.

Well worth dusting off, however, was Walter de la Mare's masterpiece *Miss Duveen* (1900). In this short story England's principal poet of childhood portrays the troubled relationship of a young boy with an insane old woman. Likely founded upon reminiscence, richly colored by the imagination, this strange, dense tale is narrated with remarkable delicacy. Marcelle Sibon had the unenviable job of translating de la Mare's intractable lines. She likewise has translated a not so venerable essay by Graham Greene on his compatriot's short stories which fittingly precedes *Miss Duveen* in the volume. It first appeared in a *A Tribute to Walter de la Mare on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (1948). His own prose replete with obsessions, it is not surprising that Greene should make much of de la Mare's obsession with death and of the symbols that accentuate it: visitants, the railway station, the railway journey—the while quietly regretting that his perplexed, fearful travelers ignore “what is at least a fact—that an answer to their questions has been proposed.”

Louis Martin-Chauffier (“Pour un dialogue universel”) petitions that men generally and Frenchmen particularly not default in their sacred duty to preserve liberty. His concern is less with the threat posed to liberty from without than from within—from men's intolerance, rooted in suspicion, of the views of others; from the abandonment of the restless quest for truth. Pointing to the free and untrammelled participation of Catholics in every major sphere of human activity and to the vast diversity in their thinking, he stresses that their participation is entirely companionable with Catholic dogma. Their liberty, he goes on to say, exposes them, as it does all others, to error and sin, yet nothing could be more unwarranted or sterile than their refusal to form opinions on subjects on which the catechism is silent.

In the article “La Liberté forgeant ses chaînes,” Stanislas Fumet returns to a theme manifestly congenial to him: the artist's use and misuse of the total liberty

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that he demands in the execution of his art. Fumet draws upon his truly encyclopedic culture in demonstrating that it is of small import whether poets, painters, and musicians accept or reject theories and conventions inasmuch as art has its own hidden springs, its own secret laws of truth, harmony, and beauty which it unfailingly reveals to the worthy. And the Christian artist need not in the least be hampered by his subservience to God. Indeed he may be greatly abetted by it; witness Claudel and Stravinsky.

In the five pages of "Socrate" Jacques Maritain panegyricizes the Grecian sage, giving special focus to his importance as the founder of moral philosophy. Giorgio La Pira, mayor of Florence, enunciates his thought on the social application of the dogma of the Assumption. "Pain et beauté," a short unpublished letter by Dostoevski, is a meditation on the spiritual message of Christ's answer to the Devil upon being tempted to make bread of stones. André Frossard ("Le Sexe apprivoisé") laments the modern Christian's failure to view in the context of Evangelical morality the three subjects which he believes most interest him: sex, politics, and history. In "Visage de l'astrologie" Cosimo Ruggieri contrasts the heavy religious content of Babylonian astrology, primary source of all astrological science, with the want of spirituality in the commercialized horoscopy of today. Of the six poems contributed by Laurence de Beylié one easily stands out, chiefly because of its eloquently rendered mystical accents.

"De Gaulle à contre-jour," an anonymous piece, presents a striking if unfinished portrait of that *Résistance* hero. The glory that was de Gaulle is sung by an ardent admirer who seems intent on demolishing some of the myths that have sprung up about the General's controversial person. In the item "Prâlines au sang" the fervent Gaullist Pierre Emmanuel roundly abuses Ernst Jünger after turning over the pages of the latter's *Journal*, II (1953), which represents the second half of the *Strahlungen*, covering the period February 1943-April 1945. Emmanuel, for whom the *Résistance* was something very real and compelling, cannot forgive the seemingly insensitive Jünger's curio-collecting, browsing, botanizing, and salon-izing in Paris while millions were enduring the ravages of war. And, as in his *Ouvrier de la onzième heure* (1953), Emmanuel expresses disgust with the Bousquets and the Jouhandeaux who hospitably received the uniformed German author, as well as with collaborators in general.

In the section "Fantômes insistants" Jean le Pavec reflects upon three writers who return to haunt the mind and memory. He goes to the shrine to pay homage to Anna de Noailles, sentimentally reminiscing about that enigmatic princess's many loves, her futile lifelong search for happiness, and her failure to find spiritual anchorage. After scathingly shaming Jean Grenier for his blushing, rubber-gloved acceptance of the manuscript of Drieu la Rochelle's *Récit secret* for publication in the September 1953 issue of the *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française*, le Pavec attempts to show that Drieu suffered from "a moral malady of the spinal cord" rather than from "a syphilis of the intellect, a certain Hegelian philosophy of history," as maintained by Grenier. In "Jean Cocteau et les charades du jeudi" he seizes upon the occasion of the election of that unrepentant innovator to the French and Belgian Academies to defend him against his numerous detractors. These, he holds, wander far afield in assessing Cocteau's work on the basis of *sincérité*.

The twenty-eight pages of a miscellany called "L'Almanach Enchanté" com-

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plete the volume. These are by unnamed members of the staff of *Les Mains Libres*. The item "Cavernes et galeries" casts a retrospective glance at a season of Parisian art exhibits, with each painter exhibited being accorded a chitchatty, capsular commentary. Written with a sneer, "La Philosophie en images" ridicules scientist Jean Rostand and existentialist luminary Maurice Merleau-Ponty for the philosophic views expounded by them in recent works. Editorial cartoons, drawn with a sting, dramatize the unidentified critic's strong reaction to them. The writer of "L'esprit est ce qu'il y a de plus lourd dans le corps" mixes humor with chilly satire in his articulate quips on the shortcomings of current European thought.

There are also two pages written amidst the dust raised by the storm over Henry de Montherlant's claim that his *Port-Royal* (1955) is a Catholic drama. Strong exception is taken to this claim, but the item is too diminutive to encompass a sufficiency of evidence, hence to disprove it nearly as convincingly as does André Blanchet in the March 1955 issue of *Études*.

A few subacid paragraphs are devoted to Simone de Beauvoir's novel *Les Mandarins* (1954), with the emphasis on its deep pessimism, on the political and moral disorientation of the existentialist intellectuals peopling its pages. One is advised that he should read this widely acclaimed Goncourt prize awardee "with a bottle of oxygen in reach."

The writer of the essay "*Macbeth* ou le crime parfait" gets in an awkward plug for the publishing house of Desclée de Brouwer while tracing out the theological significance of the Thane of Glamis' very witty self-damnation.

The concluding piece, "Dominus vobiscum," was inspired by Paul Claudel's article "La Messe à l'envers" (*Figaro Littéraire*, 29 janvier 1955), in which that liturgical rigorist vehemently protested against the growing practice in France of saying the Mass facing the congregation. The anonymous writer makes the point that the spirit of Claudel's article has been overlooked, it mattering little in itself whether or not the Mass is thus said, but it mattering much that the faithful should want to observe at length the visage of the priest, who, staggering under the load of multiple everyday ministerial duties toward them, should not be deprived by them of a last remaining half-hour for turning toward God in absolute privacy.

It is always venturesome to hazard a guess as to the ultimate prosperity of a literary collection solely on the merits of its first volume. One is, however, on safer ground in predicting that this collection's chances of attracting the highly cultivated public at which it is obviously aimed will be markedly enhanced if in subsequent volumes the editors avoid diminishing reader confidence by rummaging for material in the distant or nearly distant past (*Miss Duveen*, 1900; *Les Invités de Bellorius*, 1947; *Les Nouvelles de Walter de la Mare*, 1948), and by neglecting clearly to acknowledge borrowed pieces, as with these three selections, and probably more. Also, this reviewer feels that something is lost by the inclusion of many items of anonymous authorship (nine of the twenty-four), for does not this, at the very least, inhibit the desirable intimacy of writer and reader?

All in all, a creditable beginning. Whither now?

University of Connecticut

CHESTER W. OBUCHOWSKI

BOOK REVIEWS

Mass, Media

Contemporary Church Art. By Anton Henze and Theodor Filthaut. Sheed and Ward. \$7.50.

FOR a long time the need has been felt for an extensive discussion of contemporary church art which would give an overall picture to American readers. This gap has finally been filled by Sheed and Ward's new publication, which was translated from the German edition, *Kirchliche Kunst der Gegenwart*. The illustrations were skillfully selected more for their general representative qualities than for artistic merit. They give a true and very much alive picture of what has been accomplished in this field during the decades following the liturgical movement, which began to transform the faithful from "silent onlookers" (Pius XI) as worshippers into active participants with the priest.

It is the supreme task of church art to serve the liturgy; therefore all works must be subordinated to that purpose. Filthaut, in his theological approach, explains that since the center of the liturgy is the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the primary objective in the building of churches should be not the attainment of a certain style or form, but the creation of a valid setting for the Mass. For this reason, contemporary buildings are bringing altar and congregation closer together. The Church has always allowed artists to follow the trend of their time; our own age, inspired by the liturgical movement, desires simplicity, light, and clarity for the shelter that is the church. The transitory building is a symbol of the living House of God, and of His people wandering through the desert of time (like their forerunners in the Old Testament) to His Promised Land. As the glory of God was then present in the tent, it is today in the tabernacle, which means shelter or tent. In describing the sanctuary, Filthaut states that it exists for the sake of the altar, the Eucharistic table of the sacrificing community. Therefore the walls should not be decorated with "a Christian theme," left to the taste of the artist or patron, but the topic should be chosen carefully from the liturgical text of the Mass, showing either symbols or images.

Speaking of the baptismal font, the author recalls the *Rituale Romanum*, which calls it "the door to the Christian life." In accordance with this definition it should be near the door, possibly in a separate room dedicated only to this sacrament, as was the custom in early Christian and medieval times. In keeping with the ancient practice, Filthaut advocates a porch for every church, once considered indispensable, serving as an ante-room for spiritual preparation.

Pictures and statues are to be a "sign of faith," nothing more or less, as is precisely expounded in Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei*. He reproves "the ill-educated piety which, in churches, displays for veneration an unreasonable multiplicity of pictures, insisting on unimportant trifles, neglecting what is important." All art must arise from its era to be truthful to its form, and many of the present forms are signs that artists have caught up with the liturgical movement, bringing the ritual closer to the people.

For the section by Anton Henze on "The Potentialities of Modern Church Art and Its Position in History," Maurice Lavanoux has contributed a preface to the American edition. The secretary of the American Liturgical Arts Society and editor of its quarterly journal (*Liturgical Arts*) discusses the new vigorous life of religious art in this country. The revival styles of the past have given way,

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partly on account of increasing costs, to an exaggerated simplicity of "pure design," which sometimes makes church architecture look sterile or clinical. He explains this effect as the result of a consciously modern style, in contrast to the styles of the past, which were naturally modern. He advocates, as a way out of this impasse of the last twenty-five years, the centering of religious thinking and action around the liturgy. Neither the meaningless over-decorated churches, filled with offensive plaster statues and equally bad paintings, nor the clichés of "pure design" are a solution. Artists, ready to use their talents for the embellishment of the House of God, should be given a chance. It should no longer be necessary (as, unfortunately, it is) to fight against the crude, sentimentally facile sort of "art" which still characterizes the majority of our churches. Lavanoux too quotes the *Mediator Dei*, which has often been falsely interpreted as a condemnation of present-day art. His preface ends with the statement that there are enough artists willing to work within the discipline implied.

Henze, co-author with Filthaut, is a professor of art history at Münster, Westphalia. He discusses concrete examples of church art, explaining present-day forms as those of bygone times modified by the needs and achievements of this century. He states that the abstract forms and symbols of European styles derive from the artistic movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Trying to relate church art to these movements, he makes it clear that no realistic art can be Christian. But purely symbolic (abstract) and expressionistic art can, since the realm of metaphysics is open to art as it is to the soul. He also draws a clear line of division between "Christian art" and "church art," the latter being created only for the use of the cult. For "Christian art," statues or paintings, a place can be found in churches, according to the liturgical hierarchy. These works, of course, can find a place in the home too, always being a sign of God, a reminder of Him.

The proper usage of church furnishing came with a new type of building, which sprang up first in France, Switzerland, and Germany. The main feature is that—as in earliest times—the altar is brought close to the people. Notre Dame du Raincy in Paris, Saint Antony in Bâle, and several churches in the Rhineland, all built between 1923 and 1933, are among the first of this kind. Circular and rectangular ground plans have been combined to give the altar its rightful place, and walls and roofs are determined by liturgical requirements, designed to emphasize the altar.

Among the most interesting structures discussed and illustrated are the repaired and rebuilt churches, which had been damaged during the war. The procedures follow the old European tradition that only minor damage is repaired in the old style, while necessary rebuilding is done in contemporary style and material, thus adding to the familiar Romanesque-Gothic combinations some Romanesque-twentieth-century and Gothic-twentieth-century ones. Among the architects mentioned, Americans like Barry Byrne and Marcel Breuer are well known; but it is profitable to study the work of Swiss men like Metzger and Schilling, the Germans Schaedel and Boehm as well as Schwippert and Steffann for their rebuilt churches.

After discussing the buildings at length, Henze proceeds to painting and sculpture. He gives great importance to all small objects made specifically for use in the cult. These include not only sacred vessels and vestments but also images in which the theme is stressed and the work subordinated to the purpose

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and requirements of its allotted place. Among the finest examples, perhaps, of the latter type are Suzanne Nicolas' Stations of the Cross in Saint Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, Massachusetts.

No doubt the best known contemporary church murals are those by Henri Matisse in his little chapel in Vence; these symbolic black line drawings, so closely related to the non-representational designs of the windows, are in keeping with the utter simplicity of their architectural setting.

The *Instructio de Arte Sacra*, issued in 1952 by the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, gives clear directions on contemporary building and decoration. "It has to be simple and practical," it says, "but different from a secular building. The interior must conform to liturgical law, and sustain the faith and piety of those who come into the church to worship. Works of art should be designed to assist the liturgy and worship of the congregation." These instructions, sometimes distorted by a "conservative interpreter," are indeed as little hostile to contemporary art as is the *Mediator Dei* encyclical. The only distinction which should be made today is that between *good* and *bad*, never between *conservative* and *modern*.

In early medieval churches Christ was presented crucified, but not as the suffering Christ, rather as Christ the King. The Renaissance liked to show him as a beautiful, classical hero, while the Baroque presented a "Heavenly Sovereign." Today we find most frequently a Christ who is "our Brother and Redeemer." Our time and its expression in the arts has much in common with the earliest centuries of Christianity. Previous forms, realistic or idealized, must be transformed, not destroyed, in order to create the new. As Romano Guardini puts it, "Nature has withdrawn to a distance, so that direct relationship is not possible; no image can be conceived visually, only abstractly." Christianity is not limited to one country or continent, nor is its art limited to any part of the world. A universal form has come into existence, just as there was a timely, not a national, art in Greek and Roman times. And today there is a style based on spiritual and not on man-made principles; therefore it is likely to be a lasting one.

The well-chosen illustrations give a cross-section of religious art, architecture being particularly well represented. Besides exterior and interior views there are ground plans, sections, and details, all well worth studying. The vestments designed by Matisse for his chapel in Vence are in keeping with the style of the interior, as are its architecture, decorations, and furnishings. This chapel is the ideal example of a complete unity of all the parts. Among the most remarkable vestments done in our time are the ones designed by Sister M. Augustina Flueller, whose busy workshop belongs to the Convent of Saint Clare in Stans, Switzerland. They are of the wide, so-called Romanesque type, all handwoven and often embroidered. Chalice pictures, by Jaekel, Wimmer, and Ilse von Drage, are in keeping with the pattern of simplicity. They recall basic forms of the earliest works of this sort. Much of the sculpture recalls in theme and execution the art of the Middle Ages; but Mataré, de Marco, Barlach, Umlauf, and R. W. White give us much of the quality that is the expression of the twentieth century, evoking Christ as "our Brother and Redeemer."

With two authors and an editor for the American edition it is impossible to avoid repetitions. But all those which occur bring out points of essential importance, so that this is rather an asset to the book than a fault. It should be of utmost interest, for anybody interested in the liturgical arts movement, to find

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the same material discussed by a theologian, an art historian, and an art editor who is an architect.

LOTTIE H. LENN

Influences Shaping the Poetic Imagery of Merton

(Continued from Page 197)

Heavenly Father. Gone now the distress and wild remorse pervading the lines of "An Argument"; in their place are love and joy.

ONE MAY conclude, then, that while the influences shaping the imagery of a cosmopolitan figure like Thomas Merton can never be traced with certainty, they can be generally gauged through the two fields which have most preoccupied the poet, namely, literature and theology. Yet Merton's poetry cannot be said to have been fully dominated by any one of the various literary influences that seem to have affected his work. The technique of the Symbolist poets shows in his early works, but the symbolism of Merton's later poetry conforms more nearly to traditional literary symbolism, in the sense of presenting reality on one level of reference by calling attention to reality on another level. The early surrealism of Merton has also largely given way, in this case to imagism as the result of his apostolic mission, "contemplata tradere." Still, his later work is more than simple imagism; it is rather a combination of the diverse elements of Merton's literary background, all commandeered to serve the end of communication. Among these numerous influences, the poet admits imitating in his early poetry the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century; traces of their media are seen even in Merton's later works. Gerard Manley Hopkins, too, was much admired by the convert-poet; thus one is not surprised to find reminders of Hopkinsian techniques in the Trappist's poetry, both early and late.

The theological and ascetical advance of the poet since his entrance into the Order of the Cistercians is also apparent. A typical early poem depicts in tortured imagery the newly baptized penitent overpowered by the enormity of his sins, whereas a later poem, besides indicating an influence from St. John of the Cross, shows the poet's departures from the negative spirit of the early verse to positive spirituality. This change in attitude has affected Merton's imagery until it now abounds in figures of the trusting lover of God.

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